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# BRAVE AND BOLD

A DIFFERENT COMPLETE STORY EVERY WEEK

No. 28

THE JAIL-BREAKER  
OF SHIRLEY  
or The Boy Who Dared and Won

BY  
MATT ROYAL

Phil called to Craven to be quick, and as he did so a bullet whizzed past his head and struck Craven in the calf of the leg. The prisoner paused a moment, muttered a deep curse, then disappeared on the other side.

# BRAVE & BOLD

*A Different Complete Story Every Week*

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## THE JAIL-BREAKER OF SHIRLEY;

OR,

### The Boy Who Dared and Won.

By MATT ROYAL.

#### CHAPTER I.

"Silence in court!"

The judge looked very stern as he made a sign to the usher to restore order. The usher looked even sterner as, straightening himself up with all the dignity he could assume, he looked over the heads of the people and detected the cause of the commotion.

A crowd of schoolboys, just released from their studies and anxious to hear as much as possible of the great trial going on, were piling in at the door and jostling one another in their efforts to secure the one or two vacant seats left.

The courthouse was almost packed by a dense mass of humanity that preferred to endure the sweltering heat to leaving their curiosity unsatisfied. The trial might well be called a great one. The crime that had made it necessary had caused the greatest sensation that the little town of Shirley had ever known.

Some three weeks before our story opens two strangers had arrived in Shirley and put up at the principal inn. They had appeared to be traveling together.

Their names were Walter Craven and Arthur Demorest. They were about the same age—perhaps twenty-five—educated, stylish, and apparently wealthy.

What had been the object of their travel, whence they had come, and why they had chosen to loiter in Shirley, were all a mystery.

They were uncommunicative young men, and gave the landlord little or no information concerning themselves.

All he knew about them was that their names were respectively

Craven and Demorest—he had found that out by consulting the book, where one of them had registered for both—and that they were not afraid to spend their money.

The day after their arrival the strangers had been heard to quarrel, and the word "sister" was used several times by both.

But that night they appeared to make up again, and went out for a walk together.

What happened during that walk cannot be told.

One of them returned alone, and stated that his companion, Arthur Demorest, had gone away, and had asked him, Craven, to settle his bill at the hotel.

The landlord had no suspicion that anything was wrong until about two hours later.

Then the news reached him that Arthur Demorest had been found dead near the entrance to a swamp about a mile back of the town.

The body showed marks of foul play. There was a bullet wound in the right breast and a deep gash on the back of the head. His pockets had evidently been examined, for one of them was found turned inside out; yet robbery was clearly not the motive of the crime, for a large sum of money was found on his person.

Near him lay a couple of small keys that might have dropped off a ring containing a bunch of them.

Craven heard the news just as he was preparing to take his departure.

He showed much agitation, and acted so strangely that suspicion was at once directed toward him.

He was arrested and lodged in jail.

The trial, with which our story opens, excited more than usual interest. Many persons came from a great distance to attend it.

It had occupied three days, and was now drawing to a close.

The evidence went strongly against the prisoner, Walter Craven, and there was very little doubt he would be convicted.

During the last day of the trial—from the very beginning, some said—he acted in a very strange manner.

He appeared crushed by the weight of the blow that had fallen upon him, and sat in the box with his head hanging limp upon his breast.

Scarcely twice did he look up, and then only for an instant, when he was called upon to face the jury and submit to recognition by one of the witnesses.

Many of the spectators, stirred by curiosity, strained their necks to catch a glimpse of the prisoner's face. Only those in the front part of the hall succeeded.

Whether Craven was overcome by the thought of his monstrous crime, or maddened by the idle curiosity of the people, is hard to tell. Anyhow, he managed during the last day of the trial to keep his face from being seen except by a very few.

More than one remarked this sensitiveness on the part of the prisoner, and by noon of the last day it had become the talk of the town.

Some attributed it to his guilt, saying he was stricken by remorse or afraid of the gallows.

Others claimed that it was a sign of his innocence; but these persons were less in number.

The prevailing opinion was that Walter Craven murdered Arthur Demorest in cold blood, and as a consequence could not hold up his head.

"Silence in court!"

The usher's voice rang out for the second time, and the school-boys were awed into silence and good behavior.

Only two of them—Phil Marvin and Budd Temple—succeeded in securing seats, and these were at the extreme back of the hall.

They listened to the trial for some time, and then indulged in a whispered conversation.

"I say, Phil," said Budd, "that chap's guilty, as sure as I've got a coat on."

"What makes you think so?" asked Marvin, without taking his eyes off the top of the prisoner's head, scarcely visible above the box.

"Look at the way he sits."

"Pshaw!"

"Why doesn't he sit up and show his face? A man should look his accusers in the eye. That fellow has a guilty look—a hang-dog look, and I'll bet——"

"Hush, Budd! You'll be heard."

Phil Marvin had noticed a lady, heavily veiled, sitting a little to his right, who turned her head as Budd spoke.

She had evidently caught a part of the conversation. She appeared to be taking a very deep interest in the trial. She was richly dressed, and had that unmistakable air of refinement and good breeding that characterizes a lady.

Phil watched her for some time, and observed that, while she missed no part of the proceedings, she tried to conceal the deep interest she took.

He further observed that she was very much affected, and that it was with difficulty she suppressed manifestations of her grief.

He could not recollect that he had ever seen her before.

He concluded she was a stranger, perhaps a relative or friend

of the prisoner's, and that she had good reasons for not wishing her presence to be known.

After a while, during the cross-examination of one of the witnesses, a damaging piece of evidence was brought out.

Walter Craven, the prisoner, and Arthur Demorest, the murdered man, had been seen the evening before in the vicinity of the swamp.

This, coupled with Craven's positive denial of having been near the swamp, made things look bad for him.

The veiled lady's agitation increased. Phil noted her efforts to stifle her sobs and to avoid attracting attention.

Partly from a charitable impulse, he turned to Budd and said, in a half whisper:

"Budd, I'll believe that man innocent till he's proven guilty. There's not enough proof as yet."

The lady heard him.

She turned in her seat and gave him a look of gratitude, slightly raising her veil as she did so.

The face he beheld was young and beautiful, but it was marked by sorrow, and a pathetic, pleading expression. The sight touched Phil's heart.

The veil was dropped in an instant, and none of the crowd, intent upon the trial, knew that a subtle bond of sympathy had been created between these two persons.

The trial came to an end.

The judge summed up the evidence and charged the jury in a manner hurtful to the prisoner. He referred to one point made by the defense. Arthur Demorest had been a bad man—a notoriously bad man—whose reputation had come to Shirley, although he had been personally unknown there. This, the judge said, could have no weight, since the plea was not "self-defense." The fact that the murdered man had been an unprincipled scoundrel should not bias the jury in the prisoner's favor.

After the jury had retired to deliberate, Budd Temple and Phil Marvin resumed their conversation.

"He's condemned sure, Phil."

"I fear so, Budd."

"And that means he'll be put back for some time in the old jail?"

"Yes."

"It must be awful to languish in that old jail. I swear I wouldn't like it."

"I wouldn't stand it," said Marvin.

"Why, what do you mean, Phil? You'd have to stand it. You couldn't get out."

"Couldn't?"

Phil hardly knew what he was saying. He was thinking of the silent, secret sorrow of the young lady to his right.

"Do you mean to tell me, Phil Marvin," continued Budd, "that if you were confined in the old Shirley jail you could get out?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"By——"

Phil paused. The veiled lady was leaning forward in her seat. He fancied she had again caught their conversation.

Knowing he and Budd were talking nonsense that must grate upon the ears of one whose heart was in the trial, he closed his mouth and nudged his companion to do the same.

At that moment the jury re-entered the courtroom.

There was breathless silence.

Every eye was on the foreman and the prisoner.

The latter sat with his head bowed and his face concealed as before. He was apparently too crushed and hopeless to take an interest in the proceedings.

"Guilty, my lord," said the foreman, in response to the judge's question.

Phil Marvin heard the lady by his side give a quick gasp, but she sat still, apparently unmoved.

Whatever was her reason, she was bravely struggling to avoid

The judge sentenced the prisoner, Walter Randal Craven, to be hanged on the first of August, which was just three weeks from that day.

## CHAPTER II.

Phil Marvin lost sight of the strange lady as the crowd began to pour out of the courthouse.

He could not help wondering who she was, and why she had taken such a deep interest in the prisoner, Craven.

"Budd," he said to his companion on the way home, "did you remark that lady in black that sat a little to the right of me?"

"No."

"She was veiled."

"Oh, yes, I did see her. I think she's a lady that arrived in town to-day and is staying at the Globe Hotel."

"Do you know who she is?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing."

This cut short the colloquy on that subject. Budd knew his companion could be as uncommunicative as the Egyptian Sphinx when he chose to be.

Phil thought it unwise to tell what he had noticed. Budd was quite a talker, and was likely to draw the attention to the lady which it was plain she wished to avoid.

Philip Marvin was a fine lad of eighteen. Tall, strong and straight as an arrow, he was possessed of all the graces of person and manner that go to make a young man attractive.

He had been left an orphan at an early age, and was now living with his uncle, John Marvin, the wealthiest man in or about Shirley.

He was the best and brightest scholar in the grammar school—the best all-around athlete of his age in the town, and, as his companions said, "the best-hearted fellow in the world."

Some of the girls averred he was the best-looking fellow in creation.

Phil would have modestly disclaimed this glowing record had he heard it; he would have been content with Budd Temple's eulogy: "Marvin's a good head."

On the evening of the day of the trial Phil was walking down by the river, when he was accosted by an old gentleman, who drew him into conversation, and inquired if there was good fishing about the place.

"Yes, sir," answered Phil, eying his interrogator with wonder. "There's fine fish to be caught farther down the river."

"It's sport I'm very fond of," said the old man, with a kindly smile. "When I was your age I'd walk any distance to handle a rod."

"I'm fond of it, too, sir," said Phil; "and sometimes I go down to the Big Bend when the weather's favorable and I have a holiday."

"Is it far to the Big Bend?"

"About a mile and a half, if you follow the stream, sir; but scarcely more than a mile from here, if you go through yonder woods."

This led to a talk on the subject of rods, hooks, baits and the sport of fishing in general, and then the stranger asked some questions about the town and its prominent people.

Phil rather liked conversing with him. He seemed a benevo-

lent, kindly old gentleman, and had a simple, quiet demeanor of dignity that was winning.

After a while they became so intimate that Phil offered to go with him next day—it being a holiday—to the Big Bend and enjoy an afternoon's fishing.

The old man appeared delighted with the proposal, and hinted that he preferred Phil should bring no companion with him, as two made fishing a more agreeable pastime than a greater number.

"For," said he, "apart from a crowd's being apt to be noisy, there is the danger of having uncongenial companions, who care less for fishing than for talking."

"That's a fact, sir," said Phil, laughing. "I have a chum, Budd Temple, that I'd never take fishing with me on any account; not that he isn't a splendid fellow, but he'd talk all the fish down to the lake."

The old man laughed heartily at Phil's pleasantry, and then the two agreed to meet on the spot where they now stood at two o'clock next day.

Phil went home impressed with the agreeable manners of his new acquaintance.

Next day he met him at the appointed time and place, and the two wended their way slowly to the Big Bend, chatting pleasantly the while.

Arrived there, they selected a suitable spot under a shady tree and threw in their lines.

They were fully a mile and a half out of the town, and in a place that was but little frequented.

They had been fishing scarcely more than half an hour, when a carriage drove up the road, which here skirted the river, and stopped directly before the tree beneath which they were seated.

There was but one person in the vehicle—a lady, young and beautiful.

Phil, seeing the old gentleman raise his hat to her, lifted his also, and then went on fishing.

"Benjamin," he heard a soft voice call from the carriage.

"Yes, miss; excuse me a moment, Mr. Marvin," said the old man, and he left Phil's side.

Phil kept watching the cork on the water, and wondered what the two were whispering about behind him.

He kept his back turned to them, being too polite to stare at them, as if surprised or curious.

After a moment or two he heard a light step close behind him, and turning, was surprised to see the lady by his side.

She was no other than the veiled lady whom he had seen in the courthouse the day before.

"You are Mr. Marvin, I believe?" she said, bowing and blushing slightly.

Phil arose to his feet, and again lifting his hat, replied:

"Yes, madam, my name is Philip Marvin." Then, seeing the blush deepening on her cheeks: "Possibly it is my uncle, John Marvin, you—"

"No, no. It is you."

There was an awkward pause. The two stood staring at each other, one feeling it not his place to speak, the other not knowing how to begin.

The old man, Benjamin, stood beside the carriage and looked on. The same sorrow was now pictured on his face as on the lady's.

"Mr. Marvin," began the latter, and she trembled slightly. "I do not see you in the courthouse yesterday during the trial?"

"Yes, madam," replied Phil, "and I saw you." Then, noticing her embarrassment, and wishing to put her at her ease, he con-

tinued: "I fear you heard the silly remarks of my companion and myself. I hope neither of us said anything to cause—"

He stopped. He knew if he said any more he would betray his knowledge of her interest in the prisoner, Craven.

There was another awkward pause, during which the lady glanced nervously about, as if she feared some one might be listening.

Then she looked Phil full in the face, as if studying him, and at last broke out with:

"Mr. Marvin, can I trust you?"

Phil's heart was touched, not alone by the pathetic earnestness of her words, but by the grief pictured in her lovely face. He saw she was in trouble, and almost divined the cause.

"Yes, madam," he answered, "you can trust me to hold sacred anything you see fit to say. I noticed your agitation yesterday, and did all in my power to prevent my talkative companion observing it."

"I saw you did, and I felt grateful. I know I can trust you, Mr. Marvin, but, oh! what I have to say you may wonder at. You may——"

Phil did not speak. He had no desire to invite her confidence. He waited a moment, and she went on:

"But, no; I trust you, Mr. Marvin. I am a sister of the unfortunate young man you saw in the dock—Walter Craven's sister. He is innocent of murder—I know it—I feel it. Poor Walter would not harm a child. Yesterday I was attracted by your words that you held him innocent until his guilt was fully proven."

"Yes, madam, that is but right."

"I felt grateful for your words; you seemed a friend. The rest of that great throng deemed poor Walter a murderer. The jury condemned him on insufficient evidence. The judge himself was prejudiced. Oh, Heaven! to think my poor brother, Walter, he who is as innocent as a lamb, must hang, and I—I can do nothing to save him!"

Here the poor, heart-broken girl burst into weeping.

Phil would have tried to console her, but the old man hurried forward, and, taking off his hat, whispered to her words of hope and exhorted her to be calm.

His manner was so respectful and even deferential that Phil made a shrewd and correct guess.

Old Benjamin was her servant. He had been instructed to bring about an interview between her and the lad, and had played the angling sportsman for no other purpose.

The young lady roused herself again and said:

"Mr. Marvin, do you think my brother is guilty?"

Phil knew not what to say. He had very little doubt from the evidence he heard that Craven was a murderer, yet he wondered how so beautiful, refined and gentle a woman could have a brother a criminal. He was young in experience.

"I don't know," he replied. "I did not know your brother, but——"

"Ah, if you knew Walter you could not think him capable of crime. We grew up side by side, and I know his heart. He is good—he is noble. Before Heaven, I declare he is innocent in spite of their evidence."

Phil was touched by this beautiful confidence in the virtue of her brother just adjudged a criminal. It intensified his interest in, and compassion for, the grief-stricken young woman.

"Friend," she said, seeing the light of sympathy in his eyes and the stamp of chivalry and good breeding in his looks and demeanor. "I am in a peculiarly painful position. I came here purposely to see you, with a motive I cannot explain till I am as-

sured I may trust—I mean, count on your friendship and sympathy."

"Madam, you have both, though I am at a loss to know——"

"I will explain. I overheard you yesterday, while talking to your companion, say that"—here she glanced about her and lowered her voice to a whisper—"that if you were confined in the Shirley jail you would be able to escape. I clung to your words as a drowning man clings to a straw, believing you knew some means of egress from the dungeon in which Walter is confined, and from which—— Oh, Heaven! I shudder to think of it—he can only come to walk onto the scaffold."

"Madam," said Phil, moved by genuine pity, "I regret those silly words of mine. My friend and I were talking in an idle strain."

"And you did not mean it? You did not mean those words?"

The look of sad disappointment that crossed her face as she said this appealed to Phil's compassion.

"Only partly," he answered; "and yet"—seeing her almost about to fall from the effects of her hopes being taken away—"and yet, at the time I thought I could accomplish what I said."

"Oh, could you get in and out as you said?"

"I think so."

"Oh, could you—could you, Mr. Marvin? Could you tell my brother"—here she grasped his hands and fell on her knees before him—"could you help my brother to escape?"

Her beauty, her tears, her soul-stirring words, and above all, the passionate pleading of her intensely pathetic face, overcame the generous heart of Phil Marvin. He thought only of her suffering and loneliness. In his heart he believed Walter Craven innocent.

Helping her to her feet with the delicacy and courtesy of a knight of old, he whispered in her ear:

"Miss Craven, with God's help I will save your brother from the scaffold."

### CHAPTER III.

Phil led Miss Craven to a seat on the river bank, and while old Benjamin watched up and down the road she told her story.

"Arthur Demorest," said she, "was a bold, bad man, who stole from my brother a document he valued beyond price. He left England and came to America, my brother following him, with the hope of recovering what he had lost. They were not traveling together, as people believe, for my brother despised the villain too much to be his companion; but it seems to me Walter succeeded in overtaking him at or near this place. The quarrel arose, I have no doubt, over my brother's efforts to recover the stolen papers, but Walter never killed him—never, never, never!"

"Two weeks ago I happened to pick up an American newspaper, and to my horror read of the murder and of Walter's arrest. I hastened here, bringing with me our faithful Benjamin, and arrived to find two days of the trial over. I sent word to Walter, by his lawyer, that I had come to offer what poor help and comfort I could in his trouble, and that I wished to have an interview with him, but——"

"Did he not wish to see you?" asked Phil.

"No; he sent back word that he could not bear the meeting, and begged me, as I loved him, to make no attempt to see him, and to let no one know who I was. He said it would hurt his case."

"Why?"

"He explained it in a note his lawyer brought me. When he was leaving England he had rashly said: 'I will kill Arthur Demorest if he does not restore me those papers,' and he feared that, if it became known I was in town, I might be called as a witness, and forced, under cross-examination, to say something

prejudicial to his case. I have assumed the name of Miss Hetherington, and Benjamin is passing as my father. I would like—oh, so much—to see Walter, but he still persists in my remaining *incognito*. Oh, Mr. Marvin, if you could see my brother, if you could beg him to give me an interview, I would be so careful!”

“I will try,” said Phil. “I can easily get into the jail, having a friend there in one of the keepers. If you write a message I will convey it to your brother.”

“Oh, thank you—God bless you, Mr. Marvin.”

“And I will try to help him escape; but do not cherish too many hopes. It is not easy of accomplishment.”

They talked for some minutes longer, and Miss Craven penciled a note to her brother.

It was overflowing with love, sympathy and her new-born hope.

Then, having agreed to meet at the same place next day, Miss Craven and her servant drove off in the carriage, and Phil started home across the fields.

That night, about ten o'clock, as Murphy, one of the night guards of the prison, was going his rounds in the yard, he heard a low whistle outside the main entrance of the wall. He knew what it meant, and whistled in reply.

Shortly afterward he opened the gate cautiously, and a young man stepped in.

“That you, Phil, my brave bouchal?” exclaimed Murphy.

“That’s me,” replied Phil, regardless of his grammar in the new interest that filled him.

“Come to pass the night again with me, eh?”

“Yes, sir, till the peep o’ dawn. How’s your cough?”

“First-rate afther the balsam you gev me. Ah! you’re the boy don’t forget your ould friends. I haven’t a visithor that’s more welcome.”

Phil Marvin was a great favorite of Murphy’s. He was accustomed frequently to pass the night with him. He liked to listen to Murphy’s droll stories, and enjoyed the pleasure of knowing he helped him to while away many a lonely hour.

As for Murphy, he liked nothing better than to have the lad visit him at the jail. It was infinitely better than sitting the night through in his dreary room, or chatting with surly prisoners.

None of the inhabitants of the town knew of this intimacy. Objections might have been found to Phil’s having constant access to the jail.

“Did you bring me the tobacco you promised?”

“I did,” said Phil; “here it is—regular Irish twist that my uncle had imported.”

“Ah, be the piper o’ Connemara, you’re the faithful *gossoon*. Come in—come into my lair and we’ll have a chat. I’m achin’ to thry the new weed. What! you’ve brought me a pipe, too? Bedad, boy, but you’ve a heart as big as your whole anatomy.”

With which somewhat paradoxical statement, Murphy closed the door and set about filling the pipe and entertaining his guest.

“You’ve got a new one, I see,” remarked Phil, after he had been in a while.

“Yes.”

“A good-looking fellow?”

“Not bad.”

“Easy to manage?”

“Oh, he hasn’t given much trouble vet, the spalpeen, but you can’t tell what he’ll do when he comes to his senses.”

“Asleep?”

“Oh, no; just down-hearted—knocked out.”

“He’ll be hanged, I guess.”

“Ye-es (puff), if they carry out their programme.”

“Pretty hard lines. Do you think he’s guilty, Murphy?”

“How would I know? The judicial department o’ the law says he is, so he must hang—the schoundhrel, what did he take a human life for?”

“That’s so. How does she smoke?”

“Fine. I feel like ould King Cole when I see the smoke o’ that twist encirclin’ my head. I must get me piethor took in some kind of an epicuric attitude. Have a dhraw?”

“No, thanks. I haven’t started yet. Does he eat and sleep regularly?”

“Bedad, he does. You wouldn’t think he spilled blood three weeks ago.”

“Perhaps he didn’t.”

“Perhaps. If I was him I’d stuck in an *alibi*, like ould Sam Weller in ‘Pickwick.’”

“I say, Murphy, what is he like?”

“Who? Sam?”

“No, the new one.”

“What! Haven’t you seen him?”

“Just got a glimpse of him. Haven’t seen his face yet.”

“He’s a schoundrel born, if ever there was one. He’s got as bad an eye in his head as an alligator.”

Phil did not like to hear this. He wanted to think Craven innocent for his sister’s sake. Besides, he shrank from cultivating a friendly feeling for a guilty man.

“I’d like a peep at him,” he said, after a pause.

“I can manage it, I think, Phil; but be careful not to mention it.”

“Certainly not, Mr. Murphy.”

“I’ll leave the light in the corridor, an’ you can step down to Cell 37. I’ll just stay here an’ be on the watch. I’m afraid of them other tattlin’ fellows.”

“Thanks. Has he a light in his cell?”

“Yes; if it’s lit you can take a squint at him through the grating in the door. Be careful.”

Phil left Murphy in his room and walked on tiptoe down the corridor till he came to Cell 37.

Somehow he felt nervous. Perhaps it was his first realization of the serious nature of his undertaking.

He looked through the iron grating in the upper part of the door, and saw the prisoner. The latter was seated at a table at the opposite side of the cell, with his head resting on his arms. It was an attitude suggestive of helplessness and despair. Phil glanced up and down the corridor, and then, putting his face to the bars, whispered, softly:

“Craven.”

The prisoner started in his chair, looked slowly around, like a stag driven to bay, and then arose to his feet.

“Craven,” again whispered Phil.

In a moment the felon had crossed the cell and put his face up to the bars.

“What do you want?” he growled.

His eyes were bloodshot, and his countenance wore a startled expression.

Phil stood for a moment eying him through the bars, and to his regret his first impression of Walter Craven was not a good one.

The man was about five feet ten inches in height, and of strong and wiry build. His features were clear-cut and decidedly handsome, but his restless gray eyes conveyed the impression of a deceitful nature. This, however, Phil thought, might be due to a sense of having been unjustly imprisoned and condemned.

“Who are you?” asked the prisoner, gruffly, when he had returned our hero’s scrutiny.

“Hush! A friend,” whispered Phil.

"A friend!"

Craven's whole expression changed in an instant, and he gave a nervous start.

"Who are you?" he repeated. "For Heaven's sake, tell me who you are?"

"Read that," said Phil, passing through the bars the note the young lady had given him. "It's from your sister."

"My sister! God bless her dear heart!" exclaimed Craven.

He clutched the note from Phil's hand, and dashed across the cell to where the lamp stood on the table.

#### CHAPTER IV.

To Phil the prisoner appeared a changed man when he had read the note. The thought of his sister's efforts to help him seemed to have stirred up all the good impulses of his nature.

He ran across the cell, and grasping Phil's hand through the bars, shook it warmly.

"Noble friend in the hour of need!" he whispered, "how can I repay you? My sister speaks in the most glowing terms of your friendship and goodness."

Phil released his hand as soon as he could. He did not relish the idea of contact with an adjudged murderer; yet he felt his first instinctive dislike of the man rapidly dying out.

They talked through the bars for fully a quarter of an hour, by the end of which time they had a plan pretty well mapped out. "You will mail a letter to Dobson?" asked the prisoner.

"If you wish," replied Phil, showing just a trace of hesitation.

"Yes, yes! Without his help we can do nothing. You can get him here in three days. I've given you his address. He's a particular friend of mine and a most clever fellow—one that can carry out any scheme. Inclose that piece of paper in an envelope and address it to Horton. He'll understand it."

The penciled message read:

"Come to Shirley at once. Am in jail, awaiting execution. Search out young Phil Marvin. Be careful. ALBATROSS."

"That's his nickname for me," said the prisoner. "It will avoid the risk of compromising you."

Phil pocketed the message and was about to depart, when he thought of Miss Craven's request.

"Your sister wants to see you, Mr. Craven," he said. "The prison authorities would allow you to have an interview with her, I am sure."

"No, no, no!" said the prisoner, with vehemence. "I could not bear to meet poor Margaret in this accursed place. It would break me down."

"Nonsense!" said Phil.

"Marvin, you cannot understand what it is to meet your only sister with the charge of murder and the sentence of death hanging over you. Death itself would be easier to bear."

"She believes you innocent."

"Ah, Heaven bless her dear heart! As true as I stand here, I never harmed a hair of Arthur Demorest's head. Do you believe me?"

"I do," said Phil, who felt the force of the man's earnestness.

"My sister must not come to see me," continued Craven. "Tell her it would ruin all. She must wait till I'm free. Tell her to continue under her assumed name."

"Perhaps it's best."

"It certainly is. I've thought the matter out thoroughly. Convey to her my love, and tell her, as she holds my life dear, to obey my directions and make no attempt to see me."

Phil promised to argue the young lady out of her desire to

visit her brother at the jail. Then he took his leave of the occupant of Cell 37.

He got back safely to Murphy's room, and stayed the rest of the night with that jovial prince of entertainers.

Next morning he forwarded Craven's message to Elijah Dobson, who was staying at a little seaport town about one hundred and fifty miles away.

He did not know who this man Dobson was. He knew only that Craven had unbounded confidence in him, and would take no step till he came.

Phil made up his mind to absent himself from school altogether and to give his attention wholly to the work before him. It presented many attractions to him, as he was naturally fond of danger and adventure. He never confessed to himself that he also found pleasure in serving a wondrously beautiful woman.

He little knew that his present undertaking was going to change the whole future course of his life. He little dreamed that he was destined to meet with the most terrible dangers and to be many times at the brink of the grave. If he could have lifted the veil of futurity for one instant—if he could have looked down the vista of the next few weeks—he would have shrunk back in horror.

In the afternoon he repaired to the Big Bend, and had not long to wait till the lady and her servant, Ben, arrived. Miss Craven's first words were an inquiry after her brother. After greeting Phil in a friendly way, she said:

"My poor Brother Walter! how is he, Mr. Marvin? Does he look well?"

Phil replied that her brother was quite well, and then gave her an account of all that had passed at the jail. When she was told that her brother still persisted in her keeping away from the prison, she exclaimed:

"Oh, why can he not see me when he knows that I long to look in his dear face—to clasp his hands? Oh, Walter, Walter, would to Heaven you had never left England! This blow would not have fallen upon us. Arthur Demorest's death could not have been charged to you."

"Hush, miss, hush!" said old Ben, stepping to her side in a fatherly way. "Poor Master Walter will yet be free. Something tells me so. I have great faith in this young man who has so nobly proffered his aid."

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed Margaret Craven, warmly. "I must not forget him," and she seized Phil hands in her gratitude, and turned her luminous eyes upon him till he felt he could fight a regiment of zouaves if she bade him.

He seemed to be walking on air as he went home, and more than once he muttered:

"Gosh! I wish I had been given a sister. If I had my choice I would have one just like her."

Three days later Dobson arrived in town and soon found out Phil Marvin. Approaching him, he said:

"Excuse me, young man. Can I speak with you one moment? My name's Dobson."

That was enough introduction for Phil, who had been anxiously awaiting the man's arrival. Two minutes later the two were walking down toward the river, away from the town, where they could talk together without risk of being overheard.

Dobson was a stout man with a wart-covered nose and big bushy whiskers almost covering his face. When he walked he wobbled in a way that showed he was accustomed to the heaving motion of a ship.

He was a sailor in dress, looks, talk and action, and, as he said himself, "a sailor by inclination and purfession."

"Give me the high seas," said he, waving his hand and rolling

his eyes about as if scanning the horizon. "Them's my element—'A wet sheet an' a flowin' sea,' an' plenty o' grog an' tobacco; eh, mate?"

Having thus, as he supposed, ingratiated himself into Phil's friendship, he inquired about the prisoner. During the conversation Phil studied Dobson carefully, and found him a shrewd man and very hard to fathom. He noticed, too, that he was not as illiterate a man as he pretended to be, and that he could drop the vernacular of the sea when he wanted to.

The two spent the afternoon together and arranged their plans.

That night Phil visited the jail and communicated the whole scheme to Craven, employing the same means as he had before.

The following Tuesday evening was the date set for the attempted escape.

Strange to say, that was a night on which Murphy would not be at the jail at all. His daughter was to be married on Tuesday evening, and he had arranged to have the day keeper, a man named Turner, take his place.

Phil knew this quite well, and though it made things more difficult and dangerous for him, he purposely appointed that night.

His reason was this: He could not bear to take advantage of Murphy's confidence, and to run the risk of getting his friend in trouble. He preferred outwitting a stranger.

Monday night he visited Murphy, and when daybreak came, bade him good-by as if he were going home.

But he did not go home. He contrived to give Murphy the slip, so that the latter thought he went home. He stole into a little clothes-room at the back of Murphy's room, and there he intended to hide for no less a period than nineteen hours—that is, until midnight Tuesday.

The risk was dreadful. If anything happened that he should be caught he was likely to become a permanent inmate of the prison, for he would not give an explanation that would betray Murphy.

He was too faithful to his friendships for that. At seven o'clock Murphy and the other night guards were relieved by the day keepers, and Phil's real danger began.

Half a dozen times during the forenoon he came within an ace of being discovered, and for three hours in the afternoon Turner sat within three feet of the door at which he was listening. That door was not locked. The slightest movement—to cough, to sneeze, even to stir—would have precipitated a catastrophe.

The limbs of Phil Marvin fairly ached from their being so long in a cramped position. But he bore all his miseries like a martyr. At eleven o'clock the guards went their rounds, after which they took supper in Turner's room, and then dispersed to their various posts.

The time was drawing near, and Phil was becoming more and more nervous. One slight hitch in his programme was likely to spoil all.

After supper Turner lay down on a sofa, and in a short time fell asleep. Phil had not calculated on this, but he determined to take advantage of it.

He opened the door softly and stole across the room to Turner's side. He picked up the bunch of huge keys that lay on a chair near the sofa, and slipped out into the corridor.

As there was no one in sight he crept cautiously down to Cell 37, and unlocked it. But he did not open the door, nor did he speak to the apparently sleeping prisoner who had been warned not to move till he heard his name called.

To all appearances the door of Cell 37 was still locked. This was what Phil wanted. He hurried back to Turner's room, and succeeded in putting back the keys without waking him. Then he regained the corridor, stopped and listened.

He heard the town bell toll the hour of midnight. This warned him not to delay. The outside guards would soon enter. He hurried to Cell 37, and putting his face to the bars, called, softly:

"Craven."

"What?" came in a whisper.

"All ready."

"Where's Dobson?"

"Outside. Hark!"

"Great Heaven! What is that?"

Craven started back in terror as a frightful din fell upon the ear. Phil turned around quickly and saw three armed guards entering the corridor.

Frightened beyond expression, his very blood congealing in his veins, he shoved open the door and threw himself into the cell of the convicted murderer of Arthur Demorest.

## CHAPTER V.

"Back," whispered Phil, as he fell on the floor and placed his feet against the iron door of the cell. "Back to your corner, Craven."

The prisoner obeyed. He threw himself into a chair, and, burying his head in his hands, tried to look as if nothing had happened.

Phil crouched up tight against the bottom of the door and pressed hard on it to hold it shut.

His breath came thick and fast. If the guards found him there it assured Craven's death and his own arrest and punishment. If they tried the door they would find it unlocked, unless he could exert enough pressure to give it the appearance of being fastened. Even then, they might notice the bolt sprung. He could not tell whether they had seen him or not. He fancied they had. At all events, they must have heard him.

Nearer, nearer came the guards. They stopped before the door. A face appeared at the iron grating, and a rough voice cried out: "Hi! What are you doing there?"

For one moment Phil's heart ceased to beat. He certainly thought the question was directed to him.

But he did not stir. He did not even look up to see if the keeper was watching him.

"D'ye hear?" repeated the guard. "What's the matter with you?"

Craven raised his head. He had been as frightened as Phil. But now his quick instinct told him that the latter had not as yet been seen, and that a clever ruse might avert a catastrophe.

He straightened himself up in his chair and contrived to place himself between the light and the door. This shaded Phil Marvin and lessened his chances of being discovered.

"Eh?" grunted Craven, yawning as he spoke.

"What's the row about?" asked the guard.

"What row?"

"Wasn't it you made that racket?"

"No. How could I make it? It was outside."

This was true. The noise which had startled the prisoner and puzzled the keepers was made by Dobson outside the walls.

Phil knew at the time what it was, but he had not expected it quite so soon. It was part of their plan.

About five minutes after the tolling of the midnight bell, Dobson was to cause a terrific din outside the prison walls, by means of half a dozen gongs manipulated by boys, and a tin horn handled by himself. The idea was to startle the guards and cause them to rush out of the prison and mount the walls to see what was the matter.

This would give Phil and Craven a chance to get from Cell 37

to the kitchen at the back of the jail, where they could conceal themselves till the guards returned to their posts.

It was a good plan, but was thus far checked, as we have seen, by the laziness and drowsiness of the keepers, who imagined the sounds had been made inside the prison.

Finally the guard at the door said:

"Craven."

"What," growled the prisoner.

"It's no use."

"What?"

"Your game."

"What game?"

The prisoner arose to his feet. He was too excited to sit still. He thought certainly the plan of escape had been discovered. He forgot himself and let the lamplight fall on the crouching figure just inside the door.

"What do you mean?" he asked in a voice that trembled. "What game are you talking about?"

"Oh, we've noticed you."

"Noticed what?"

"We've noticed the signs of hope in your face lately. You've got hopes of some kind. You've been a changed man these last few days."

"You're observant fellows," sneered Craven.

"That's our business."

Phil was considerably relieved. He saw the guards had no knowledge of the projected escape.

Craven was also relieved, and in a calmer voice said:

"Yes, boys, I confess I've had hope, and I have good reason for it."

"What is it?"

"My lawyer is trying to get a new trial."

This threw the guard off the scent.

He spoke civilly to the prisoner for a few minutes and then went off down the corridor, taking his companions with him.

It was almost a miracle that they had not seen Phil or discovered the cell door to be unlocked.

As soon as the sounds of their footsteps died away Craven blew out the light and breathed a sigh of relief.

He crossed the cell on tiptoe and, seizing Phil by the shoulder, whispered:

"Did you bring me a revolver?"

"No; I brought no weapons."

"Curse the luck! Did you forget it?"

"No. We don't need revolvers. I wouldn't use them if I had them."

"Nonsense! We stand no chance without them. We may be stopped."

"Hush! Listen!"

"Let us go," whispered Craven, who saw possible liberty on one side of him and certain death on the other.

"Not yet," answered Phil. "Keep still."

"What are we waiting for?"

"For Dobson's signal."

"Confound Dobson! Doesn't it depend more on us than on him?"

"Hold on, Craven. Don't open that door. Don't, I tell you. It's foolish. We've got to wait."

The prisoner was hard to restrain. His long confinement and his dread of death had made him desperate. He was ready to risk his life a dozen times to purchase liberty.

"Hark!" he gasped. "What on earth's that?"

"That's it! That's it!" exclaimed Phil, excitedly. "That's Dobson's signal again."

There arose outside the prison walls the same wild din that had startled the prisoner before. This time it was louder and more prolonged.

"Wait, wait!" whispered Phil; "a moment more and our time will come."

"Why not now?"

"Keep still, I beg of you. Don't even speak."

"I can wait no longer, man! You don't know what it is to see the gallows within a few days of you."

Phil had almost to push him back to keep him from opening the door. Just then a sound was heard far down the corridor.

"D'ye hear that?" whispered Phil. "You would have been discovered."

"What is it?"

"The guards returning."

The two held their breath and listened. Up the corridor rapidly came the footsteps, and the three guards rushed past the door without as much as glancing toward the cell. They had heard the row created outside by Dobson.

"Come on, Marvin."

"Not yet. Let them get outside first."

"By Heaven! I'll wait no longer!" exclaimed the felon, hoarsely. "I have only to die once, and it will not be on the scaffold, as the murderer of Arthur Demorest."

"Wait a moment, man——"

"No!"

Phil's entreaties were useless. With a rashness born of his captivity and conviction, the prisoner opened the door and sprang out of the cell.

Phil was obliged to follow, and the two dashed down the corridor.

The mad race for liberty had begun.

## CHAPTER VI.

Phil Marvin was what the boys call "a cool head," and Craven might advantageously have submitted to his guidance.

But the harm did not come out of the prisoner's rash move that might have been expected. The guards were already outside the prison.

The uproar bewildered and puzzled them.

When the fugitives reached the end of the corridor, Craven was for rushing out after the guards and attempting to pass them in the darkness. Phil grasped him by the shoulders and pulled him back.

"Are you crazy, man?" he exclaimed. "It's certain death if you go there."

"Heavens, don't let me be caught. I would die before going back to that awful cell."

"Obey me, then, or I'll give up the attempt and leave you to your fate."

"I will."

"Follow me."

Phil entered Turner's room, crossed it, and opened a door on the opposite side.

"Quick, Craven," he whispered. "This leads us down to the kitchen. Give me your hand."

Phil knew every step of the way, for he had taken care to study the place during his last visits to Murphy.

In the meantime the guards had rushed out through the yard and scaled the high walls by means of ladders. When their heads appeared above the top of the wall the din ceased. Nothing could be seen but half a dozen little boys skulking off in the darkness.

One of the keepers called out:

"Who's there?"

After a moment or two a response came from a burly figure that was rolling about on the ground:

"It's (hic) only me. I was'h wantin' th' (hic) boysh to sherenade me. I'm goin' to (hic) get mar-ried."

"Confound it, the fellow's drunk," muttered one of the guards on the wall. "We've been sold."

"I shay," called out the mudstained figure beneath the wall, "is this a (hic) 'ospital?"

"Go home, you loafer, we have no time to talk to you."

"I shay, boysh, don't (hic) be unshociable."

This was Dobson, who could well simulate drunkenness. He was trying to gain time to allow the prisoner to get from the cell to the kitchen.

"Go home," returned one of the guards, "go home or we'll run you in."

They got down off the walls and recrossed the prison yard, carrying the ladders along with them. Immediately Dobson's manner changed. He arose to his feet and listened. When he was satisfied the guards were not watching him he bounded along in the shadow of the wall and did not stop till he came to a point opposite to that where he had lain in the mud.

Pulling out of the grass a rope ladder that he had concealed there, he threw an end over the wall. The other end was fastened to a root of a tree on the outside of the wall.

"There's no time to lose now," he muttered. "Those urchins may go home and tell what they've seen—and the horses'll be getting restless."

At this moment Phil and his companion were emerging from the kitchen at the back of the jail.

They had been watching through the window, and were satisfied the guards had gone inside.

"Softly now," whispered Phil, stepping out onto the gravel. "One of them may have stopped outside to listen a while."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a little terrier belonging to Turner appeared around the corner and set up a loud barking.

"Curse the dog," muttered Craven, making a rush for the fence.

Phil followed, and after both of them ran the dog, still yelping and barking loudly enough to arouse the neighborhood.

The animal gained on them and, strange to say, passed Phil without noticing him, and seized Craven by the leg of his trousers.

Craven uttered an oath and kicked at the dog. It flew back at him more savagely than ever, and tried its best to sink its teeth in his flesh.

There had been time from the first bark of the dogs for the guards to seize their weapons and rush to one of the doors to see what was the matter.

Phil saw that his life was in danger if he did not act quickly. He picked the struggling dog up in his strong arms and made for the wall.

One of the guards saw the dark figure running, and shouted. A pistol was discharged to give the alarm, and soon the whole force was on the alert.

Phil reached the wall and saw Craven mounting the rope ladder. The latter was so excited he could scarcely climb. He lost his footing a couple of times.

Phil called to him to be quick, and as he did so a bullet whizzed past his head and struck Craven in the calf of the leg. The prisoner muttered a deep curse, and, pausing a moment astride the wall, shook his fist toward the jail. Then he disappeared on the other side.

Phil threw the dog away from him and bounded up the rope. While he was climbing, the rising moon shot from under a cloud, and the earth was bathed in a flood of dim, yellow light.

Turning his head, Phil saw within a few yards of him three of the guards in the act of raising their rifles to take aim at him. He disappeared over the wall before they had time to discharge their weapons.

Springing up from the ground where he had fallen, he ran with all speed toward a clump of trees.

He could see Dobson and Craven ahead of him, the latter limping painfully in consequence of his wound.

When Phil reached the trees he paused and looked back. One of the guards was on the wall—the others were not in sight.

Phil divined immediately what they were doing. They were getting out the horses that were kept in the stables adjoining the prison.

He ran forward again and caught up to Craven and Dobson.

"What are we to do now?" asked Craven, panting and trembling. "Where's the horses?"

"Yonder," said Dobson, pointing down toward the river. "But anchor a bit; we must try and not be seen running."

The prison stood on a hill overlooking the town of Shirley, and from its walls the main road could be seen for a considerable distance each way.

There were, at this point, only two directions—east or west—that a person on horseback could take.

The fugitives paused beneath a tree till they saw the prison gates open, and then Dobson gave the word to run. That was the moment when the direction of their flight was least likely to be noticed.

They hurried down the hill, keeping as much in the shadow of the trees as they could, and in a few moments all three of them had reached the road by the river bank.

"Confound it!" exclaimed Dobson.

"What's the matter?"

"One of the horses is gone. It has broken away."

The horses had been left tied beneath a tree. There had been two of them—one for Dobson and one for Craven. Dobson's was now gone.

"What's to be done?" exclaimed Craven, looking at the big-boned white horse that was quietly nibbling at the grass.

"One's enough," said Dobson. "You take it, Craven, and ride for your life."

"Be quick," added Phil. "They're coming."

"Confound it! I don't know the way, and this wound of mine must be attended to before long."

"Go on, Craven," said Dobson, impatiently. "Mount quick—you'll find the way; I'll tell you a plan—"

"I've got a plan," interrupted Phil, and he astonished both by his ingenuity.

"By George, Marvin, I owe you my life!" said Craven, "and now you save me again, for they are almost upon us. See! they are coming directly upon us. This plan will enable me to escape and reach Horton. Untie the horse quick, Dobson, and get it out here. I wouldn't be caught and imprisoned again for all the world."

"Don't fear. This white nag can leave a train behind."

Dobson unfastened the horse's rein, and the next moment the animal was bounding down the road toward the west, its rider lashing it like a broncho-tamer.

Meanwhile the prison guards had acted with surprising quickness. The moment they had seen the second dark figure disappearing over the wall they realized that a prisoner was escaping.

Three of them immediately made for the stables and got out

the horses. The other guard mounted the wall to watch the direction taken by the fugitive.

By the time the riders got to the gate they knew the escaping prisoner was the very man whom they, in two days more, would be expected to produce as Arthur Demorest's convicted murderer.

Fear of punishment for their carelessness made them desperate. They swore to recapture him before morning. They galloped out of the jail yard and down toward the river.

That was the direction pointed out to them by their companion.

For some moments they saw no sign of the fugitive, but at last one of them spied the white horse bounding along the river bank, and shouted:

"Look! look! Yonder he goes on a white horse. Along the bank—see?"

"Yes, that's him, sure enough. That's Craven. Ride for your lives, boys!" cried the leader.

A desperate race ensued. The pursuers' horses and that of the fugitive were well matched as to speed. At the end of five miles the same space separated them—a little more than a quarter of a mile.

The keepers urged on their animals by every means in their power, but they could not gain a yard on the white horse.

By and by, at the end of about an hour's furious riding, they approached a village, and the fugitive gained a little. He entered the main street, and dashed down toward the market square.

His pursuers began to fear they would lose him, when of a sudden he stopped short before the town-pump, and descended from the saddle to take a drink.

"We have him now," cried Turner, whipping up his horse. "He thinks he has distanced us. Out with your pistols and be ready for a struggle, for Craven's a desperate man."

Nearer and nearer they came to the pump, all the time admiring the nerve of a man who could stand so coolly taking a drink, and death staring him in the face.

The latter did not appear to know he was so near capture. He seemed to imagine he had got out of danger. He did not even turn his head till the prancing horses were almost beside him.

"Surrender, Walter Craven," cried the leader of the guards, stopping before the pump and drawing out his pistol. "Surrender, or you are a dead man!"

The other guards leveled their weapons also.

"What's the matter, anyhow?" asked the drinker, coolly laying down the vessel. "I'm not Walter Craven."

"Who are you, then, for mercy sake?"

"My name is Phil Marvin," said our hero, as he began to pump another drink. "I'm out for a constitutional. Fine night. Isn't it?"

## CHAPTER VII.

The escape of the murderer of Arthur Demorest caused the greatest excitement the little town of Shirley had ever known.

Margaret Craven and old Benjamin heard the news and their hearts were glad, but they were filled with anxiety lest he should be recaptured.

It was part of the great plan for them to remain incognito at their hotel for a couple of days, to avoid giving rise to suspicion.

When Phil Marvin got rid of the guards whom he had so cleverly thrown off the scent, he rode off to the north till he came to another road, also leading to Shirley.

He urged on his horse, and did not pull rein till he came to an unoccupied farmhouse about three miles from the jail. There, according to expectation, he found Dobson and Craven hiding.

A better place could not have been chosen. Craven was now

feeling much better, his companion having extracted the bullet, which was not deeply lodged, and dressed the wound.

He greeted our hero with much warmth, and thanked him a dozen times for having saved his life.

Phil reminded him that he was yet far from being out of danger. Even now searching parties were out, and by morning the whole country would be aroused.

"That's true," said Dobson. "We must make a start."

It was settled that Phil should go no farther. Craven would not hear of his needlessly risking his life by accompanying them.

Craven and Dobson would take the two horses—Dobson had meanwhile caught the other—and ride off toward the north till daylight. Then they would turn toward the east and endeavor to make the seacoast. By this course they hoped to elude their pursuers.

Phil Marvin was to return home and remain quiet for several days, during which time he was to comfort Margaret Craven. As soon as he got a letter from Dobson, announcing that he and the prisoner had reached a safe place, Phil was to take Miss Craven and her servant and conduct them to the place indicated in the letter.

Before the horses were mounted, Dobson surprised Phil by taking the very step that he himself had been thinking of. He approached Craven and, looking him in the face, said:

"Walter, old mate, before we go any farther, there's one question I'd like to ask you. If you answer it honestly and squarely you will ease my mind."

"What is it, Dobson? Out with it quick! Every moment wasted means additional danger."

"Did you cause the death of Arthur Demorest? I feel that I have a right to know."

Phil trembled as he waited for the answer. This was the one thing that had worried him all along.

"Do you think me guilty?" asked Craven, stepping down from the stirrup and turning around so that the moonlight fell on his clear-cut, handsome features; "do you think me guilty?"

"No, lad," returned Dobson. "I've known you a long time, an' couldn't think you'd commit a crime; but I wanted to hear it from your own lips."

"Then I swear I did not kill Arthur Demorest, and that I had no knowledge of his death till I heard others speak of it."

There was a tone of sincerity and truth in the speaker's words that removed all doubt from Phil Marvin's mind.

Dobson grasped Craven's hand warmly and said:

"Walt, old man, I believe you. You can command my services to the end."

As he was mounting his horse, Craven said:

"All I'm fretting about now is my poor sister. Marvin, lad, take care of her, and when you get our message bring her quickly to me. Until then I'll know no peace."

"Don't fear, Craven," replied Phil. "If I live I'll bring her safe to you. By the way, she will be anxious to know if you recovered the document."

"What document?"

"The one Demorest stole—the one you followed him to—"

Craven started with surprise. He had not known Phil had heard of this family secret.

"Yes," said he, "tell her I have it safe. Demorest gave it back to me, and I managed to conceal it when the officers searched me."

"Good! She'll be glad to hear it," replied Phil.

He bade both men a hearty good-by, and watched them till they rode over a neighboring hill.

"God grant he may escape," he muttered. "I believe he's as innocent of Demorest's death as the child unborn."

Phil was perfectly right in his belief, notwithstanding the verdict of "an intelligent jury."

For the next three days Phil remained at home and kept quiet.

He had an idea he was suspected of having had something to do with "the escape," and he did not want to put himself in the way of danger. He contrived to send a note to Margaret Craven, bidding her hold herself in readiness for a journey, and meanwhile to be hopeful.

The fourth night he ventured out to the post office, and to his joy received a letter from Dobson announcing their safe arrival at the seaport town of Horton.

The writer requested Phil to make all possible haste and endeavor to have the lady there not later than Tuesday evening.

Phil tore the letter into shreds and set out for the hotel to apprise Miss Craven.

He was turning the corner of a street when he met Murphy.

"Phil, my boy," whispered the latter, "you're the one I've been trying to see for the last three days. I've been wantin' to warn you——"

"Warn me!"

"Yes, avic."

"What's up?"

"You're in danger."

"How?"

"Why, accordin' to reports you've been makin' a Jesse James out o' yourself. They suspect you o' aidin' the murderer o' Demorest to escape. They'll arrest you as sure as they see you."

"Not if I know it."

"They will, me boy. Turner has laid information an' they—— Whist! Great heavens! Get out o' this quick."

"What's the matter?"

"See, there's a couple o' them watchin' you. They're waitin' to nab you."

"Keep still a moment, Murphy, till I get a look at them. Yes. You're right. They have their eyes on me an' mean mischief."

"If you're innocent, boy, it's betther to give yourself up before they arrest you."

"I can't. But, Murphy, you can help me."

"How, boy, how? It's dangerous for me, but I'll do anything I can."

"I'll ask you to do nothing dangerous. You'll simply deliver a message for me. Go to the Globe Hotel and inquire for an old gentleman named Benjamin Hetherington. Tell him to meet me at the Big Bend."

"When?"

"At once. As quick as possible."

"I will, Phil. Ah, by the rock o' Cashel, boy, you're caught. They're comin' toward us."

Phil was around the corner in an instant, with two officers of the law after him. He was beginning to reap the results of having aided Craven.

He knew it would increase his danger to be seen running, so he chose the streets that would get him out of the town in the shortest possible time.

He contrived to elude his pursuers, and safely reached the Big Bend. He concealed himself among the branches of the oak tree beneath which he and Ben had sat fishing.

About ten o'clock he saw old Ben Hobb coming down the road. He was about to descend from his perch in the tree and greet the old man, when he saw something else that filled him with surprise and fear.

Behind Ben Hobb skulked two dark figures, watching Ben's every movement and guiding their pace by his.

Phil instantly realized the danger of his position. The old man would come to a halt under the tree and, like as not, would call out his (Phil's) name.

The officers would hear him, and either discover Phil then and there, or wait about in the vicinity till he should be forced to come down out of the tree.

Ben Hobb reached the foot of the tree and stopped. It was evident from his manner that he was expecting to meet some one.

The officers that shadowed him stopped also and waited at a distance of about thirty yards to see what he would do.

"Heavens!" thought Phil; "they suspect old Ben. They must also be suspicious of Miss Craven."

Phil was afraid to speak even in a whisper, lest he should startle the old man and cause him to look up or to utter an exclamation.

He was also afraid to keep still, lest Ben, imagining he had come to the wrong spot, should shout out to him.

A few minutes passed, with the four figures still and breathless. Phil could hear his heart thumping against his ribs, and feel the cold beads of perspiration on his face.

He knew not what to do. It was not only that he himself was in danger, but the slightest accident was likely to bring trouble to Miss Craven.

Old Ben looked up and down the road, and then struck an attitude of listening.

The officers concealed behind the fence watched his every movement.

Phil climbed out farther among the branches overhanging the river, and screened himself as well as he could with the leaves.

Ben stopped moving around, and called out softly:

"Philip, Philip Marvin."

"Oh, Heaven!" gasped the startled listener in the tree, "he has ruined everything with his carelessness. Here are the officers coming."

The officers had heard the old man's words, and were now approaching him stealthily.

Just as Ben sat down on the bank to wait, the officers, with a quiet "Good-evening, sir," sat down, one on each side of him. Ben started, and looked at them in wonder and fright.

"Who are you, gentlemen?" he exclaimed, in trembling tones. "What do you want?"

"Oh, nothing," replied one, lighting a cigar. "Just saw you sitting down and thought we'd join you. Nice night."

"Yes, indeed it is, but really I——"

Phil pitied poor Ben in his fright, but he was powerless to help him.

If he stirred among the branches the officers would hear him.

He was in hopes Ben would outwit the men and they would go away, but his hopes were doomed to disappointment.

Poor old Ben was too simple to cope with the quick-witted minions of the law.

"Yes, a fine night," continued the officer who had already spoken; "a fine night, indeed. You're waiting for some one, I see."

"Well, yes, I——"

"Young Marvin, isn't it?"

Ben was thunderstruck. He stammered out in his fright that was Philip Marvin he expected.

"I thought so. Well, we'll wait with you. That was a sad case happened, wasn't it?"

"What, sir?"

"The murder of Arthur Demorest—by Walter Craven."

"Oh, yes," gasped Ben, showing more confusion.

"Did you know either of the parties concerned?"

"Well, no—yes—I——"

Heavens! The old man was going to let out the whole secret! Phil made a slight movement and the branch upon which he sat broke.

He came crashing down and fell headforemost into the river, within twelve feet of where sat the astonished officers.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Swimming was one of Phil's many accomplishments, and he used it now to good effect.

When he had recovered his senses after his first immersion, he dived and swam under the water, directing his course down stream.

He was well acquainted with this part of the river and knew just where to go.

After swimming about fifty yards, he emerged from the water and climbed upon the opposite bank.

He stood for a moment, so as to let the officers see him, and then darted in among the trees as if he intended to keep on running.

This action produced the result he aimed at. It drew the two officers away from old Benjamin and started them in pursuit of the person they were really after—Philip Marvin.

They could not cross the river at that point, so they ran along the bank up-stream toward a bridge about two hundred yards distant.

They felt sure Phil would direct his course away from the river and across the country.

That is where they deceived themselves. Phil had not run away at all. He had merely concealed himself among the trees in order to watch what they would do.

As soon as they started for the bridge he crawled down the bank, and slipped quietly into the water. Diving again, like a fish he swam back across the river, and landed among a clump of bushes within twenty feet of the frightened Hobb.

Here he sat and watched his pursuers till they reached the other side, and disappeared among the trees.

He now climbed up the bank, and in a moment was by Ben Hobb's side, startling him by his words:

"Mr. Hobb! Keep still. Don't move."

"Mercy on us, boy——"

"Shish! You nearly exposed the whole secret."

"I did. I couldn't help it. They frightened me."

"Well, we've got to get out of this at once. We're in great danger. Come, we'll make for the old barn."

"I want to go back to the hotel."

"No; that's the very thing you must not do."

"Why, lad, why?"

"You'll only get Miss Craven into danger. You trust to my directions, and it will be better."

The old man saw the wisdom of this advice, and promised to abide by it. He allowed himself to be conducted to the old barn, and agreed to hide there till Phil came for him.

Our hero had now before him a difficult and dangerous task. It was nothing less than to steal into the town and seek an interview with Miss Craven at her hotel.

He got into the town without attracting attention, though he saw another officer looking for him and heard a person remark:

"It was young Marvin that helped the murderer of Demorest to escape. They're looking for him."

He arrived at the hotel and stole in by the side entrance. He had a friend there in Tom Strong, the son of the proprietor.

Tom started when he saw him and drew him into a little sitting-room.

"Good heavens, Marvin!" he exclaimed. "What trouble is this you've got into? Two of the officers were here not five minutes ago. They're going to arrest you."

"No, they're not, Tom. I'm leaving town to-night."

"Goin' to skip, Phil? I don't see how you can do it. The whole population's down on you. Even your uncle clamors for your arrest."

"You don't say so?"

"It's a fact. They say——"

"Hark! What's that? Some one in the next room just spoke my name."

"It's Turner, Phil, and another officer. They've seen you enter. Come here."

"Tom, I want to speak to the strange lady that's stopping here."

"Whew! Come, then: we've no time for ceremony."

Phil followed Tom upstairs, and the latter pointed out a suite of rooms as those occupied by "Miss Hetherington."

Phil hesitated not a moment. Bounding forward, he knocked on the lady's door.

While he was waiting for it to be opened, he heard a heavy footstep at the bottom of the stairs.

"It's Turner, Phil," whispered Tom.

Phil waved his hand to Tom, and the latter, understanding the signal, disappeared.

The same moment the door opened and Phil rushed into the room, brushing past the astonished and startled Miss Craven.

"Pardon me," gasped Phil. "Shut your door quick! We're in danger."

Miss Craven grasped the situation in a moment and summoned all her energies to meet it.

She closed the door and drew Phil into a contiguous and smaller room, where she bade him stay till the danger was past.

The officers did not search the lady's rooms. The wily Tom threw them off the scent.

As soon as they had gone downstairs Miss Craven returned to Phil and shook hands with him.

He repeated his apology for the fright he had given her, and related all that had happened.

He showed her the necessity of getting out of town before the authorities should connect her with "the escape."

"Do you think they would?" she asked, timidly.

"Yes," said Phil, "and it would cause you a good deal of trouble and annoyance, besides delay you in meeting your brother."

"Ah, my brother! Poor, dear Walter! What he has suffered. Do you think he is safe?"

"There is no doubt of that. He is as safe as——"

"He is innocent. The idea of his killing Arthur Demorest! My God! when I think of him being imprisoned and condemned to death——"

"But that's over now. Come, Miss Craven, we must lose no time."

"Yes, yes, kind friend, I will follow your directions implicitly."

"Then get ready for a journey as quickly as possible. We must leave here within half an hour. I'll get Tom Strong to drive you to the Big Bend, where you'll find Benjamin and me."

Miss Craven was willing to abide by any arrangement Phil should make, so the latter called Tom and explained what he wished him to do.

Tom was ready to do anything for his friend, and was by no means loath to help a beautiful woman.

He promised to secure his father's carriage and to drive the lady as far as the barn beyond the Big Bend.

All arrangements being made, Phil left the room and started downstairs with Tom.

"You'll be caught sure, Phil," said the latter, "if you attempt to walk to the Big Bend to-night."

"I don't intend to walk," was Phil's whispered reply.

"You don't."

"No, I'm going to ride on your bicycle."

"The very thing."

"I'll be less likely to attract attention, and can make greater speed if pursued."

"The brake's off it, Phil."

"All right. I'm going now to hide in the stable till you've started."

"Oh, you want us to go first?"

"Yes; I must be sure of the lady's safety. If I don't catch up to you at the Big Bend, drive on and pick old Ben up at the barn. The officers won't stop the lady. They have no warrant to do so."

"All right. I understand."

A quarter of an hour later our hero, concealed in the stable, saw the carriage drive off.

He noticed that Tom thoughtfully left the big gate open so that he could ride out without having to dismount from the bicycle.

Just as soon as they were gone he saw a couple of men approach the gate and peer into the yard.

They had evidently been informed that their prey had been seen around the premises.

What they thought of Tom's driving the lady out Phil could not imagine.

Standing in the darkness of the stables, and looking out through the open door, our hero saw the men separate.

One of them entered the back part of the hotel and the other advanced into the yard.

Phil glanced at the bicycle standing against the fence, where Tom had laid it, and wondered how many seconds it would take him to dash out and mount it.

The man saw the bicycle, too, and examined it in a careless way, never dreaming it was the chief hope of the hunted fugitive.

Presently his companion came out of the hotel kitchen and said: "He's not in there, Bill. He left a few minutes ago, one of the girls says."

"He didn't go out with the carriage."

"No; he's about the premises somewhere."

"Sure. He may be in the stable."

"Yes. Let us look."

"Stay here and I'll search it."

Phil pulled himself together for an effort.

Just as soon as the intruder entered the door, he bounded forward, and pushing him over, made a dash for the bicycle.

He was on it before the other man could collect his senses, and down the yard he flew like a locomotive.

He was an expert bicyclist, and knew how to get speed out of a machine.

He turned onto the sidewalk, whirled around a corner, and was halfway down a side street before any one recognized him.

He made a detour to throw possible pursuers off the track, and in a few minutes was on the road leading to the Big Bend.

There was not a horse about the place could overtake him now.

Although there was no moon, the night was bright, and he could see for quite a distance ahead of him.

He encountered no trouble till he came to the top of a long hill leading down to the Big Bend, and there he saw ahead of him

and just at the foot of the hill, the carriage, stopped by a couple of men.

The latter were evidently asking questions of Tom Strong and Miss Craven, but Phil knew they dared not detain them, having no warrant to do so.

He stepped off his bicycle and stood on the roadside to await the issue.

Presently the carriage started on again, and the men sat down under the oak tree, presumably to wait for his arrival.

How they knew he was to follow puzzled him. They were evidently possessed of more intelligence than he had ever credited to the Shirley police.

He could have passed them by taking to the fields, but in that case he would have been obliged to discard the bicycle, and would have been unable to overtake the carriage.

He waited on top of the hill for ten minutes, and was then rewarded by hearing a shrill whistle in the distance.

It was Tom Strong's signal that old Ben had been taken into the carriage.

The men heard the whistle, too, and arose to their feet, but they did not see the dark figure away up on the hilltop, for the latter stood with his bicycle up against the fence.

The hill was an ugly one to descend on a bicycle, as it was very long and rather steep, and Phil hoped the men would go away and give him a chance to walk down and lead the bicycle.

They stood, however, at the foot of the hill, and waited as only policemen can wait.

Phil wanted to wait, too, in order to let the carriage get a good distance ahead, but his hope of doing so was defeated.

He heard a sound behind him, and turning, saw a couple of horsemen approaching rapidly from Shirley. He had no doubt they were pursuers.

For him to remain where he was meant capture.

He had no course but to ride down the steep hill and trust to his speed to pass the two men at the foot of it.

He hardly thought they would shoot at him, as their orders were merely to arrest him.

"I'll try it, anyhow," he muttered. "They'll have to jump out of my way or get run over. Gosh! It's a horrible hill to descend—and there's no brake on the blamed machine."

The men caught sight of him as he was mounting the bicycle. They leaped to their feet and started to ascend the hill.

Phil gave a vigorous shove at the pedals, and then put his feet on the coasting bars to let the bicycle have its way.

Whizz! Off he went!

Each yard he traveled gave him fresh momentum. He fairly flew down the hill.

Trees, upturned roots, boulders and fence posts flashed past his sight as so many lightning strokes.

The men near the foot of the hill would have to jump out of his way to escape getting killed.

But, to Phil's horror, the men attempted a fearful, cruel plan of stopping him.

Hastily snatching a couple of rails off the fence, they threw them across the road in such a way as to bar his progress.

Down, down the rider sped with lightning-like rapidity.

Nearer and nearer he approached the awful obstruction that would smash the machine into atoms.

He could not stop. He could not slacken his speed the slightest bit.

His heart stood still from mortal terror. The power of will—even of thought—seemed to have left him.

Death stared him in the face.

## CHAPTER IX.

If Walter Craven, the convicted murderer of Arthur Demorest, had witnessed that terrific ride down the big hill, he must have felt grateful to the man who had risked so much to get him out of Shirley jail.

Phil's life was saved partly by his own skill and coolness, and partly by chance.

On the whole, it was a miraculous escape.

As he neared the deadly obstruction, he saw that the ends of the two rails did not quite meet. There was a space of from six to eight inches between them.

He took this in in one second's glance. He was unable to check his speed, so he steered for the crack.

It was done in an instant, in one touch of the handles, guided by a brain clear and strong from the influences of nerve and danger.

The next moment he was past the obstruction and flying on down the hill.

He was soon enveloped in a cloud of dust, and hidden from the view of the men who had, without thinking, endangered his life.

He caught up to the carriage, and was soon seated in it beside Miss Craven and Benjamin, Tom having taken his bicycle and a shower of thanks and blessings, and started for home by a roundabout way.

The horses were good strong roadsters. Phil handled the whip and reins like a Jehu, and chatted pleasantly with Miss Craven, and won her golden opinions of his conversational powers.

But he by no means forgot the chief aim—the insurance of her safety.

A ride of three hours brought them to Bedford, which was thirty-six miles distant from Shirley.

Here they left Tom's carriage and horses, it having been arranged that he was to come for them the next day.

They hired a fresh conveyance, and by ten o'clock in the morning reached Grantham, a town of considerable size, which lay about forty-five miles from Horton. Dismissing the driver and the carriage, they strolled along one of the principal streets and entered a restaurant to partake of breakfast.

Here they encountered the first real danger since they eluded the officers at Shirley.

They had hardly got started at their breakfast when a couple of men entered the restaurant and sat down at a table near them.

One of the men, after glancing over a newspaper, remarked to his companion:

"That's been a sensational case, hasn't it?"

"What? The Demorest murder?"

"Yes."

"Very. I see that scoundrel, Craven, has got clean off."

"Yes. The cleverest escape I ever heard of. Do you think he killed Arthur Demorest?"

"Undoubtedly! The evidence, though mostly circumstantial, was very convincing. Why, one fact alone satisfies me he was guilty."

"What's that?"

"The landlord stated that when Craven came back alone, he said: 'Landlord, my friend, Demorest, has gone away. He told me to settle his bill and pack up his things for him. I'm going up to his room.' The landlord raised no objection, but a few minutes afterward he happened to go upstairs and glanced into Demorest's room. Craven was in the act of rummaging among the things in Demorest's trunk. The landlord saw him transfer

some documents and other things from Demorest's trunk to his own, and one document he put in his pocket. At that moment the landlord stepped into the room and Craven started, colored, and hastily closed the trunk. Now, that looks bad, doesn't it?"

"Yes, very. I think as you do. Walter Craven murdered Demorest in a cold-blooded, deliberate manner."

Phil Marvin pitied poor Miss Craven during this colloquy. She had heard every word of it, and it pierced her tender heart.

At times Phil feared she would faint or cry out, or in some way betray her agitation.

Old Benjamin was nearly as bad. He had no command over his features. Two or three times he would have risen from his chair, but that Phil nudged him to be quiet.

The strangers were renewing their conversation when a third person entered and sat down at the same table with them.

The newcomer, a friend of theirs, after greeting them, said:

"Well, have you heard the news?"

"No. What is it?"

"Pshaw! You're behind the times. Perhaps you've heard nothing of the Shirley boy, Marvin, that aided Demorest's murderer to escape?"

"Yes, yes! What now? What of him?"

"The Shirley police tried to arrest him last night."

"And—?"

"He got away. Tricked them like a fox."

"Well, well!"

"But that's not all."

"What next?"

"The officers have for some days been suspicious of a strange man and woman staying in town—an old man and a magnificent, queen-like young woman. Well, these two have disappeared with the boy, and the whole country's being scoured for them. It's believed they've come this way, and—"

Phil wanted to hear no more. He thought the sooner he got his companions and himself out of the restaurant the better.

Noticing Miss Craven was unable to eat, he whispered to Ben, and then called a waiter and paid his bill.

When they had got out on the street, Phil said:

"Miss Craven, would you object to walking a little while?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Marvin."

"Then you and Benjamin continue on on this street till I overtake you. I'm going to hire another vehicle. I will catch up to you before you go a mile."

"Very well, Mr. Marvin," replied Miss Craven; and she and Benjamin started off.

Phil soon had reason to be glad that he separated from his companions.

When he was hiring a carriage the proprietor asked him if he had any one else with him.

"Not just now," was Phil's evasive reply.

"'Cause if you had, I couldn't rent it to you. There's a lad about your age, named Marvin, flying from the police, and I heard a while ago he's in town."

Phil got a start, but managed to keep his countenance straight. "However," continued the liveryman, "this boy Marvin has a woman and an old man with him, and I see you're alone."

"Is that the young duffer that helped Demorest's murderer to escape?" asked Phil, looking as serious as an owl.

"Yes. You've heard of him, I suppose?"

"Yes, but didn't hear he's in town."

"Well, they've got an exciting rumor going around that he arrived here about an hour ago, with the lady and the old man, having traveled all night."

"Were they pursued?"

"Yes, by half a dozen mounted special officers."

"Where are the officers now?"

"They're somewhere about town. Searching at all the hotels, I suppose. Two of them passed here a minute ago. If they catch Marvin, it's all up with the rascal."

"I suppose so. Say, boss!"

"What?"

"Send a driver with me, and I'll pay you."

"Certainly, sir."

Phil wanted the driver to bring back the carriage. Two minutes later Phil Marvin, seated beside a colored and liveried driver, rode out of the stables and up the street.

On the way the driver gave him some more information. The town authorities, he said, had been notified that young Marvin was in town. They were taking steps to prevent his exit.

Phil kept a sharp lookout as they rode up the street. After a while he said to the driver:

"I am going to pick up a couple of friends farther up the street—a gentleman and lady."

The negro stared at him, and Phil saw he was suspected.

"Look here, driver," he added, "if you keep your mouth shut and drive to Huxley, I'll give you twenty-five dollars; if you don't I'll blow you off the seat," and he exposed to the gaze of the astonished darky the muzzle of a revolver.

"Yes, sah—yes, sah, I'll earn the twenty-five dollars, sah. I ain't supposed fo' to know a thing if I don't hear it."

A half mile farther on they picked up Miss Craven and her servant, and then the carriage went rolling along the street rapidly.

They got out of town safely through the ingenuity of the darky, and by four o'clock reached the little village of Huxley. The driver was paid off and dismissed, and then the fugitives set out to walk to Horton, their immediate destination, which lay just three miles off. There they expected to find Dobson.

Great circumspection was now required of them. Phil, who had a faculty for picking up news, heard that the searchers had arrived at, and left, Huxley ahead of them.

Whether they had gone to Horton or not he did not know; but he had little doubt that place would be watched, as it was a seaport.

The three walked on through the fields, and soon came in sight of the sea. Horton stood before them, with its group of vessels lying at anchor in the harbor.

"We had better not enter before darkness sets in," said Phil.

"As you wish, good friend," replied Miss Craven. "I have learned the wisdom of leaving all to your good judgment."

"Then I think we'd better rest a while at the entrance to this wood. I apprehend more danger for us in Horton than we have yet encountered."

"Do you think Walter is there?" she inquired.

"I have no doubt he is safe on Captain Dobson's vessel in the harbor," replied Phil. "In a few hours at most you will be able to join him."

"Oh, the joy of meeting my poor brother Walter—the injured martyr who has borne so much!"

Phil was becoming as sad as Miss Craven was becoming joyful.

He knew the time was fast approaching when he must separate from her.

He now made a suggestion that showed his good sense, and it was adopted.

As soon as they reached the village limits, he walked ahead, and Miss Craven and Ben, likewise keeping a little apart from each other, followed.

In this way they reached the hotel named by Dobson in his letter.

The landlord, guessing who they were, conducted them into a little sitting-room, and then dispatched a note to "Captain Dob."

The joy of the fugitives was great when the sitting-room door was opened and Captain Dobson appeared.

"Hello, mates! Hello, miss!" he cried, stretching out his big hand and doffing his hat. "Here safe at last. The Rubicon is crossed."

He got as good a greeting as he gave, and was at once plied with a dozen questions concerning Walter Craven.

"Walt's safe, miss," he whispered, taking a chair by Miss Craven's side. "He's aboard my vessel, the *Albatross*, lying out there in the harbor. If you step to the window you can see the top of the masts rising above the Big Cliff. Yes, he's safe an' sound, an' dyin' to see you, miss. All we're a-waitin' for is to get you aboard, an' then we heave anchor, order grog for all hands around, and ho! for Merry England;" and the captain, in the exuberance of his mirth threw his hat up to the ceiling and caught it on his forefinger.

"Oh, the joy of meeting my poor brother! When do we start, captain?"

"At once, miss—the sooner the better."

"Yes, yes—at once! I long to be with Walter."

But here was the hard part of it. Miss Craven looked at Phil Marvin, and immediately there came before her mind the services that gallant youth had performed for her and her brother.

"And you?" she said, as Phil advanced to bid her good-by.

"I would go with you," he said, "but Captain Dobson says it is not your brother's wish."

"Your brother said, ma'am," began Dobson, "that already we owe too much to the young gent, and—"

"Yes, yes," broke in Phil, who saw there was some weighty family reason for his not going. "The captain's right—I'll go no further. You are now safe."

"Then God bless you, Mr. Marvin," said Miss Craven, handing him a little packet. "Accept this. God bless you."

That was all Miss Craven could say.

The good-by was very affecting. Old Ben nearly cried as he shook Phil's hand. Even Dobson showed emotion at parting with the lad.

Phil sent his regards to Walter Craven, and then saw his two companions depart from the hotel with Captain Dobson.

For a quarter of an hour Phil sat alone in the room, enduring such loneliness and depression of spirits as he had never felt before.

The last look the young lady had given him was engraven on his heart, never to be effaced.

Suddenly he gave a start.

A couple of persons in the next room were talking, and their voices came through the partly open door.

"Walter Craven killed Arthur Demorest, I tell you," said one.

"Yes; but that's not the point now. Our duty is to catch young Marvin, who helped the murderer to escape."

Phil leaped from his chair. He recognized the voice of Turner.

He opened the door and walked out past the men.

They saw him and shouted:

"There he goes."

He got onto the street and ran like a deer. He looked back. There were five men following him.

Where would he go?

Some impulse turned him toward the sea. He ran with all his speed, hardly knowing where he was going in the semi-darkness. Soon the crowd behind him increased. His pursuers numbered

not less than twenty. He stopped. He could go no further. He had come to the Big Cliff, a precipice fifty feet in height overlooking the sea.

Several vessels were away out in the harbor, anchored in the still water.

His pursuers got nearer. He had no way to turn.

The sea and the tremendous precipice were before him; the officers of the law and imprisonment were behind him. He had but one resource.

Throwing off his coat, he bounded forward and leaped headforemost off the cliff.

A few seconds later he struck the water and disappeared beneath its dark surface.

## CHAPTER X.

The next issue of the *Horton Advertiser*, the chief paper of the place, contained the following startling paragraph:

"THE LAST OF YOUNG MARVIN, THE JAIL-BREAKER—DEATH FOLLOWS MISDEEDS.

"Young Marvin, who assisted Craven, the alleged murderer of Arthur Demorest, to escape from Shirley jail, met with his death last night in a manner that recalls the old saying 'The Wages of Sin Is Death!' He was pursued by the police to the top of the Big Cliff, from which he leaped into the sea, a depth of fifty feet. He sank immediately, and was not seen again. His tragic end is a lesson to youths that have set their feet on the paths of wickedness and crime."

In the same issue was an editorial headed "A Review of the Shirley Case." The following paragraphs are excerpts from it:

"In many respects—in the prominence of the legal talent employed, in the establishment of new precedents, in the sifting of evidence entirely foreign to the case—the Shirley murder trial is the most remarkable of the present decade. Though we have from the beginning inclined to the belief that Demorest came to his death at the hands of Craven, we do not agree with the verdict that it was murder in the first degree. A motive for deliberate murder has not been clearly established, and in the absence of that motive the prisoner is entitled to the doubt.

"Little is known of Craven's antecedents, but that little is good. As far as can be learned, he was a quiet, unassuming young man. On the other hand, while little is known of Demorest, that little is bad. He was an acknowledged blackguard, a professed black-leg, and a convicted perjurer, blackmailer and forger. Craven's escape may have been the result of more than human interposition, a consideration that throws a veil of sadness over the fate of poor, misguided young Marvin, now lying at the bottom of the sea."

Let us see what has become of "poor, misguided young Marvin," whom the Horton editor set up as a warning to reckless youths.

When our hero leaped from the cliff he fell headlong into the water, striking it as a diver, with his hands together, protecting his head.

He sank to the greatest depth he ever went in his experience.

The water seemed to crush him, but he felt himself being gradually borne upward.

When he reached the surface he swam away from the shore, making as little noise as possible.

He heard the shouts on the shore, and knew the men had given him up for lost. It was too dark for them to see him from such a height.

Afraid to land, he swam toward some lights that he knew belonged to a vessel.

Whether it was from his fall or the crushing of the waters, he felt bruised and almost exhausted, and knew he could not hold out long.

He turned on his back and floated a while to rest himself.

Then he heard shouts in the direction of the lights, and he guessed they proceeded from the sailors on the vessel.

The latter were heaving the anchor. The ship was about to leave the harbor.

Phil's only refuge would be gone. He turned over and swam with all his might.

It was a life-and-death race.

If the vessel started before he reached it he would be lost. He had not sufficient strength to swim back to land.

"Yo, heave ho!" came the cry from the sailors. Phil breathed a prayer to Heaven and concentrated every energy of body and mind on the task.

Nearer and nearer he approached the lights. The big black hull loomed up before him.

He was almost fainting, but he made another effort, putting into his strokes the last of his strength.

He had almost reached it—he was within ten feet of it—when he heard the splash of the big wheel, and the vessel moved.

He was too late. He turned himself over on his back and gave himself up for lost.

Suddenly he felt some hard object touch his side and scrape past him.

Exhausted and hopeless as he was, he reached out his hand and grasped it.

To his surprise he was pulled along through the water. It was the yawl-boat belonging to the vessel. It had sheered around as the vessel started, and Phil had clutched it at the stern.

The feeling of something tangible filled him with hope in an instant. He clung to the rudder-post with both hands, and allowed himself to be towed along in the water.

This moment's rest restored some of his strength, and also partially revived his mental faculties.

He realized that he must make the supreme effort before the vessel attained speed, so, again invoking Heaven's aid, he grasped the top of the sternpost, and by putting hand over hand worked himself a foot or two forward; then, raising himself in the water, he gave a prodigious shove of his feet, as well as a quick jerk with his arms, and rolled over the gunwale.

He fell on his back in the bottom of the yawl-boat, closed his eyes and sank into unconsciousness.

When Margaret Craven bade good-by to Phil Marvin at the Horton hotel, her heart was sad despite the fact that she was expecting soon to see her brother.

It ran counter to her generous instincts to take leave so coolly of one who had done so much for her.

Dobson led her and Benjamin down to the seashore, where they found a little boat manned by a pair of stout rowers.

Into this the three of them stepped. The captain took the tiller and the boat pushed off.

"Safe at last, miss," said Dobson.

"Yes, thank God," answered Miss Craven, looking back at the receding shore, and thinking of the friend she had parted with forever. "But safety doesn't bring full happiness."

"Once aboard the *Albatross* with your brother Walter, you'll forget the troubles you've had. Row steady, there, mates. Port a little; steady now."

"When did you see my brother, Captain Dobson?"

"About an hour ago, miss. He's hidden on the vessel there. Look! See how she sits on the water. There ain't no craft like that on the high seas."

He pointed with pride to the *Albatross* lying at anchor about half a mile away. She could scarcely be seen in the gathering darkness, but her lights shone out like twinkling stars.

As they neared the ship, Miss Craven's yearning to see her brother caused her to break out into hysterical sobs.

"At last—oh, at last!" she exclaimed, and she clasped her hands and looked to heaven in gratitude; "I shall see my poor brother, who has borne so much anxiety and trouble. Oh, God! when I think they would have hung him for Arthur Demorest's murder—"

"Be calm, child," said old Benjamin, leaning forward to comfort her. "You'll soon see dear Master Walter. There's danger in your crying so loudly."

"Yes, yes," put in Dobson; "if those landsharks heard you an' got an idea Walter was aboard, there'd be trouble. Your brother's not safe till we're outside the harbor."

Miss Craven tried hard to repress her emotion. For weeks her nerves had been overwrought by anxiety and trouble. She had been obliged to appear calm and unconcerned when her heart was breaking.

Now that the tension had begun to relax, she was in danger of becoming hysterical.

"The murderer of Arthur Demorest, forsooth!" exclaimed she, hardly knowing what she was saying. "Arthur Demorest, the perjured villain that tried to blight my brother's life, and then dared to think of wedding me! Benjamin, when I think of the blackness of Arthur Demorest's heart, I ask myself would it have been a crime if my brother had killed him!"

Captain Dobson and the sailors paid no heed to Miss Craven's wild words. They seemed to think her mind was unbalanced from the effects of prolonged and acute mental suffering.

A few more vigorous strokes of the oars brought their boat alongside the *Albatross*, which towered above them like some great leviathan of the deep, and in a few minutes they were all on board.

The command to heave anchor was given as soon as Captain Dobson touched the deck, and the first sounds to greet Miss Craven's ears were the shouting of the sailors and the shuffling of their feet as they sprang briskly to their several duties.

"Bring me to Walter quickly, Captain Dobson; I long to see him."

"Yes, miss, I suppose you do. In a minute now, when I give the men a few orders. The quicker we get off the better."

"Yes, yes, but hurry. It seems an age since I saw his dear face."

Her voice was now much calmer. The knowledge that she stood on the same vessel with her brother, and that both were leaving the land wherein they had had all their troubles, gave back to her much of her lost strength.

"Take me to my dear brother," she repeated.

"Yes, miss, you'll see him now," said Dobson. "Come to the cabin that we've got decked out for you. Walter will be with you in a minute."

He led the way and she followed.

"It ain't quite safe for Walter yet, miss—not till the harbor's past," remarked Dobson. "At least he thinks it ain't; but we'll soon be out o' harm's way, an' it'll be a tight boat that'll overtake us. Here's your cabin, miss. Sit down an' be comfortable, an' take off your things. I'm goin' out to give a few orders to the men, but I'll tell Walter he's safe to enter now."

Old Benjamin stepped out of the cabin after Dobson, in order to be out of the way during the coming affecting scene between brother and sister.

The faithful old fellow's eyes were wet with tears of joy.

Miss Craven, when left alone, dropped on her knees and offered prayers to Heaven. For joy, she knew, is sometimes as hard to

bear as grief, and she asked for strength to bear this scene temperately.

She needed the grace she asked.

The cabin door opened and a deep, manly voice exclaimed:

"Margaret, Margaret, my love, we are united at last!"

"Walter, Walter, my brother!" she cried leaping to her feet and striving to drive away the tears that nearly blinded her. "Oh, my brother! Thrice welcome visitor!"

She rushed forward to throw herself in his outstretched arms, but suddenly she stopped, looked in his face, and then fled with a wild cry to the opposite end of the cabin.

"You? You?" she shrieked in terror. "My God, it is you, and not my brother Walter!"

Uttering a second piercing shriek, she reeled forward and fell senseless to the floor.

The visitor was not her brother, but his murderer.

It was Arthur Demorest.

## CHAPTER XI.

It was Arthur Demorest, and not Walter Craven, that had been assisted by our hero to escape from the Shirley jail.

The villain Demorest, having murdered Walter Craven, assumed the dead man's name that he might more easily escape the consequences of his crime, for his own reputation was so bad that it would have told against him.

It was an easy thing to take Craven's name. Neither of them was personally known in the town. Even the landlord had not become sufficiently acquainted with them to know which was Craven and which Demorest.

When the villain returned to the hotel he said to the landlord: "Demorest told me to pack up his things and settle his bill."

From that on he was known as Craven. When his lawyer brought him word that Margaret Craven was in town he became terribly alarmed. His refusal to see her, and his strange action in court—the concealing of his face—were precautions against her recognizing and betraying him.

He slightly resembled Craven, who was his cousin—especially when his face was in profile—and, as has been seen, he carried out the impersonation successfully.

Had he kept his own name he would probably have been lynched before the trial took place.

He now stood in the cabin of the *Albatross*, gloating over his beautiful victim lying helpless and senseless on the carpet.

"I have you now," he muttered, as if she could hear him; "you are mine at last, my pretty bird. The prize is worth the risk of the gallows."

He advanced to her side. As if there was some revivifying power in his evil presence, Margaret Craven regained consciousness and opened her eyes. They fell on her captor, and she uttered another shriek.

Old Ben appeared at the cabin door, and shouted:

"Arthur Demorest, you villain, there is a God above that will smite you if you move a step to further terrify that innocent and helpless child. Beware!"

"Benny, my boy," replied Demorest, coolly, as he drew a pistol from his belt, "if you don't subside into tranquillity and leave this cabin, I'll perforate you with bullets."

Poor old Ben fled in terror, and never stopped till he reached the stern of the vessel.

There he moaned and shouted in his despair.

"Arthur Demorest on board! The villain, Demorest, murdered Master Walter. Oh, Heaven protect her. She is in the power of a fiend!"

Meanwhile Demorest sat down in the cabin, and, in a sarcastic tone, addressed Miss Craven thus:

"Maggie dear, we meet again. You once spurned my addresses as you would those of a reptile."

"I spurn you now!" she cried, confronting him with heaving bosom and flashing eyes. "I do not fear you, Arthur Demorest, for there is a God who will protect me from the monster that murdered my poor brother."

"Let us not talk of that," said the villain. "Rather let us arrive at some peaceful settlement. You once scorned me as unworthy even of your acquaintance. My love, which was sincere, you despised. The game is altered now. The stakes are in my hands. This is my vessel. Every man aboard is my servant, and will obey my commands. You are my prisoner. I intend you to be my wife. You will never reach a port till you are."

"Monster of iniquity!" cried the terrified girl, striving to hide her fear. "You, the murderer of my poor brother, dare to ask me to wed you—"

"Hold on, madam! you mistake me. I ask nothing. The day for that has gone by. I will now use force. You are my captive—my bride-elect. You cannot escape me!"

"Oh, God in heaven protect me!" she exclaimed, falling on her knees and appealing to her Maker. "Save me—save me from this vile wretch!"

The villain was awed for a moment, but he smiled and said:

"Miss Craven, this cabin is yours. Though you are my prisoner, I will show you the respect due my future bride. Take things easy and don't be alarmed. If you act right, you'll have no trouble; but"—and here his eyes glistened with an unholy fierceness and his voice became hoarse—"if you are contrary and compel me, I will show the cruelty of a brute. Shake hands with me now, and I'll order supper and leave you for the night."

He advanced to take her hand, when she rushed past him and fled shrieking out of the cabin.

She ran like a frightened hare to the stern of the boat and paused, panting and trembling, by Benjamin's side.

"Save me, save me—oh, Benjamin!" she cried.

Demorest followed her and commanded her to be quiet and return to her cabin.

Then he seized her by the arms, and was about to force her to leave the deck, when he was startled by a voice that seemed to come out of the depths of the sea:

"Stop, Arthur Demorest!"

All three heard the cry, and two of them staggered back aghast, for it had a sepulchral ring.

Demorest released his hold on Miss Craven, and advancing to the stern of the vessel, looked over into the sea.

He heard nothing but a moaning sound that blended with the wind into something like a dirge.

"It is fancy," he muttered, as he felt a superstitious awe creeping over him. "I must not give way to it."

He turned again to his beautiful captive, and was about to tear her from old Ben's protecting arms, when the same wild voice arose out of the sea:

"Stop, Arthur Demorest!"

This time the command was louder, firmer and yet more sepulchral in tone.

Demorest started as if he had been thrilled by an electric shock.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed, "what can it be?"

The pallor of his face showed even in the darkness, and, though he was no coward, his frame shook.

He advanced again to the stern, and peering into the dark waters, called out:

"Who speaks?"

There was a moment's silence, broken only by the creaking of the vessel, the plashing of the water against its side and the whistling of the wind through the sails; and then the answer came loudly and distinctly:

"I, Arthur Demorest!"

"Who?" gasped the affrighted villain.

"Have you forgotten the man you murdered?"

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Demorest, staggering back upon the deck; "it is Walter Craven's spirit!"

He turned and walked quickly down the deck, and shortly afterward disappeared down one of the hatchways.

Brandy was his only refuge and solace in a case like this.

The voice that he had heard came not from the depths of the sea, but from the yawl boat that was towed behind the vessel.

Benjamin had already carried on a short conversation with the "spirit" there, for the "spirit" had heard his cries and called to him.

As soon as Demorest disappeared, Ben Hobb covered his mouth with his hands, thus forming a speaking-trumpet, and spoke:

"He's gone. Now's the time."

"All right," answered the "spirit," in a subdued, but healthy tone. "Throw over a rope and make an end fast to something on deck. Quick."

"Yes, yes. We will!" whispered Miss Craven, forgetting that the night winds alone were loud enough to drown her sweet voice.

Great caution was needed, for there were several of the sailors on the forward deck.

Ben acted with promptness. He secured a rope from a large pile on the deck, fastened an end to a stanchion, and heaved the other end over the stern of the vessel.

The occupant of the yawl had, meanwhile, pulled on the painter, or towline, and brought himself within reach.

"Quick!" whispered Benjamin, leaning over the gunwale.

There was little need of that direction. The youth who was climbing the rope hand over hand was fully alive to the necessity of hurrying, and was likewise strong and active.

In less than two minutes he was standing on the deck and grasping the outstretched hands of Margaret Craven and old Ben.

Meanwhile Demorest had fortified himself by a liberal potation of brandy.

He had gone below, partly with the intention of relating the occurrence to Dobson, but now, feeling the effects of the liquor, he was ashamed to do so.

"He'll think me a fool," he soliloquized, "and maybe tell it to some of the men. It wouldn't do for Arthur Demorest to acquire the reputation of weakness and belief in spooks."

Arming himself with a dirk, the villain buttoned his coat tightly about him and went up on deck again.

The air had become raw and chilly, and a northeast wind was piling up white caps on the water.

Demorest walked boldly to the stern of the boat and found the place deserted.

Looking over the railing into the sea, he waited for a repetition of the mysterious voice, but none came.

"Fancy," he muttered; "and yet I swear I heard his words. Ah, well, I'm not afraid. I'll have a chat with his sister now, and let her know I'll stand no nonsense."

He walked down the deck and entered the cabin. Miss Craven and old Ben were just finishing the supper that had been laid for them.

They arose as he appeared, and took seats as far away from him as they could.

"Ben, you'll retire a while," said Demorest, roughly. "I have something to say to Mademoiselle Craven."

Ben looked toward his mistress, and, receiving a nod from her, got up and left the cabin.

Demorest seated himself, and, lighting a cigar, began:

"Madam, you can see for yourself you are as completely in my power as a caged bird. Cross me, and I'll show no mercy. Act as I wish, and neither you nor your servant will suffer harm. I'm going to marry you and take my position in the world as your husband—the husband of Lady Hetherington. Understand that. You are the only living barrier between me and a title and estates. I mean to have them if I don't have you, and if I don't have all three it will be because I put you from my path by killing you. Take care. It's a big temptation to a man who has worked so long for the prize. I have only to prove you are dead to become Lord Arthur Demorest Hetherington. What do you say? Is it going to be peace or war between us? If peace, shake hands with me."

The lady had risen to her feet on his entrance, showing that she scorned to sit in the same room with him.

Now drawing herself up to her full height, and unconsciously confounding him with the force of her matchless beauty, she replied:

"I will make no treaty with the murderer of my brother. I would not defile myself by touching the hand of such a wretch as you. Arthur Demorest, I despise you, and I do not fear you."

"Oho! you'll yet come off your high horse, my beautiful madam," sneered the scoundrel. "You'll yet be glad to shake hands with Arthur Demorest."

"Leave me——"

"I'll not leave you. I'll bring this battle to a crisis now. We'll see who'll be the victor. I'll force you to shake hands with me."

He advanced, as he spoke, with a triumphant curl on his lip, and would have tried to seize her hand but that a tall, dark figure arose from behind a high-backed chair and stood before him.

The next moment a fist flew out like a nine-pounder discharged from a cannon, and Arthur Demorest, with his nose and mouth bleeding, went flying over an ottoman and fell on his back on the carpet.

For a moment he lay as if dead.

Then he looked up and saw standing over him a youth with clinched fists, set teeth, and eyes glaring like those of a ferocious tiger.

Miss Craven's protector was our hero, Phil Marvin!

## CHAPTER XII.

There seemed to be something providential in Phil's finding refuge in the yawl boat of the *Albatross*. Margaret Craven needed his help and protection, and now he was at hand.

Her joy at meeting him again may be imagined. It helped to modify for a time the grief occasioned by the loss of her brother.

Her gratitude, when he stepped between her and Demorest, knew no bounds.

Demorest's first action, when he recovered from his surprise, was to attempt to draw his pistol.

He was not quick enough. He got a second blow from Phil's fist that floored him again, and partially stunned him.

When he arose to his feet he was not in possession of his pistols. Phil had them, and was now covering him with one of them.

"Arthur Demorest," said our hero, "it would scarcely be a crime if I took your life. You are the blackest villain that ever

sullied this fair earth. I helped you to escape, and risked my life a dozen times for you. You have forced me to become an exile——"

"I know it. I'm grateful. I——"

"Gratitude is not in your evil heart. You used my aid, and cared no more for me than the dust beneath your feet. For all that I care not, but this lady——"

"Don't shoot. I'll——"

"I tell you now, though I'm practically in your power, that I'll devote the rest of my life to bringing you to justice. I'll yet hang you for the murder of Walter Craven."

He lowered the pistol and the two stood confronting each other. A wicked gleam of light shone in Demorest's eyes. He saw that he was not going to be killed and his boldness returned.

"How did you get on this vessel?" he asked.

"Heaven sent me to protect this young woman," was Phil's reply.

Demorest stared in wonder. He could not imagine how Phil had got on the boat, and for a moment he suspected his accomplice, Dobson, of having had a hand in it.

He saw Margaret Craven clinging to Phil's arm and looking trustfully to the youth for protection, and the sight made him wild with jealousy.

Hissing a dreadful imprecation through his teeth, he bounded across the cabin and out through the open door.

The moment he was gone Phil Marvin turned to the shrinking, terrified young woman, and said, with a forced calmness:

"Miss Craven, I cannot conceal from you that you are in awful danger. Every sailor aboard this boat is no doubt a tool in the hands of Demorest. His first care will be to kill me, and that will leave you defenseless."

The girl's answer was to cling more tightly to his arm and declare she would die with him.

"No, no," replied Phil, gloomily. "He does not wish you to die. Death would be preferable to the fate intended for you. I am to be put out of the way, and my only regret is that in dying I will leave you at his mercy."

"Oh, could you not hide? Could you not——"

"No, I am in his power. Escape is out of the question, and yet——here he paused and glanced about the room——"there might be some good in resisting."

Phil ran to the cabin door and called old Ben. The latter was by his side in an instant.

"Ben," whispered the youth, giving him a pistol, "take this and defend your mistress for a few minutes. Fire a shot if there be danger."

He conducted Miss Craven to the stateroom intended for her, which adjoined the cabin, and placed Ben outside.

"Defend her with your life for ten minutes, Ben. I'll return."

With this he hurried out of the cabin and stole along the deck. There were no signs of life on the afterdeck, so he turned and crawled cautiously forward. When he reached the fore-hatchway he heard voices below. He stopped and listened.

Dobson was calling Demorest a fool to allow himself to be bullied by a youngster.

"But how did he get aboard, Dobson?"

"I don't know."

"Had you anything to do with it?"

"No."

"Then it's a mystery."

"It's no bigger mystery than getting you out o' jail. Don't the Shirley people call that a mystery?"

"He's wonderful."

"Are you going to let him bully you?"

"No!" and Demorest strengthened his negation with a terrible oath.

"That's right; get rid of him at once."

"I will—this very night."

Though Phil was horrified by what he heard, he was not surprised. He listened again, and heard Demorest say:

"There's no need o' the men knowing who she is, Dobson."

"No; but they'll wonder."

"Yes."

"Especially if she acts contrary."

"You might say she's my wife."

"It would only make matters worse, Demorest, unless——"

"What?"

"You make the men think you and she have quarreled; give them the idea she's cranky, and you good-natured with her, and their sympathy will be with you."

"A good idea. It's hard telling how some of those fellows would view it if they learned who she was, and that she was a prisoner."

This speech gave Phil a little hope. Bad as the sailors might be, there were yet likely a few of them still possessed of some chivalrous instincts that the sight of a defenseless woman might arouse. Demorest, who knew them best, had said so.

The thought struck Phil that if he could preserve his own life for a few days he might get a chance to study the men and pick out the best of them. To these he could show the true position of the lady, and to appeal to what was best in their natures.

"But the men would never bother their heads about the youngster, Dobson," said Demorest, after a pause.

"No, darn it, they'd never ask a question if he disappeared altogether."

"They probably haven't seen him at all yet."

"Then——"

"What?"

"They mustn't see him. Settle him now an' throw his carcass overboard."

"I will."

"And if I was you I'd complete the job and douse the old man, too. What's the use o' leavin' witnesses hangin' 'round?"

"You're right, Dobson," replied the arch villain, trying to work himself up to the proper state of mind for his foul crime. "It's a necessity to get rid of them."

"Certainly. You can't tell what might happen. That boy, if let live, might yet bring you to the gallows. Get rid of him, I say, at once. He's too darned pious for this world, anyhow!"

Phil had never wholly trusted Dobson, but he was not prepared to find him such a perfect Machiavel of wickedness. The man was an able second to Arthur Demorest.

Turning from the hatchway, Phil hurried to the captain's cabin, just back of the pilot house. He opened the door and glanced in.

To his surprise, he found it a perfect arsenal. All of the arms in the boat must have been stored therein.

There were pistols, muskets and cutlasses hanging about on the walls, and a couple of kegs of powder and a keg of shot showed him there was enough ammunition for a sea fight.

Immediately Phil was seized with a resolution. He must obtain possession of the captain's cabin. He closed the door softly and hurried aft.

As he went he passed a sailor who had just descended from the upper deck.

The fellow merely glanced at him and then went on about his business.

Phil ran to the cabin, where he had left Miss Craven and Ben,

and startled them both by his sudden appearance. Ben came nearly shooting him in a mistake for Demorest.

"Come quickly, both of you," whispered Phil. "There is a safer place than this. Come!"

The girl emerged from her stateroom, and was by his side in an instant.

"Quick, Ben!" she exclaimed. "Follow Mr. Marvin."

Phil took her hand in his, and the three hastened out of the cabin. To go forward it was necessary to walk around the outside of the cabin between it and the deck rail. There were two passages—one on each side of the cabin.

They had gone a few steps down the starboard side when Phil saw Demorest approaching. The latter saw him, and hurried forward, drawing a weapon as he came.

"Back!" whispered Phil, and he almost carried Miss Craven toward the door through which they had just passed.

When he reached it he pulled it shut, and then hurried his companions around the other side. Demorest, he knew, would open the cabin door, believing they had gone in there.

The vessel was rolling a little, which made it difficult for persons unused to the motion to walk.

Phil picked Miss Craven up in his strong arms, and whispering to Ben to follow, walked as fast as he could toward the captain's cabin.

He reached it without meeting any one, though he saw some one watching him out of the window of the pilot house. He set Miss Craven on her feet, and looked back over Ben's shoulder.

He saw a dark figure following them, creeping along by the larboard rail; then he opened the cabin door.

"Quick, enter, both of you," he whispered, keeping his eyes on the approaching figure. "In there we have a chance of holding the villains at bay."

All three entered, and Phil closed and barred the door.

A scream from Miss Craven caused him to turn his head. To his horror and amazement, he found the room already occupied.

Captain Dobson stood before him, with a drawn cutlass in his hand.

"Where are you going?" he growled. "What brought you here?"

Phil drew a pistol and raised it. Dobson was quicker. He drew a pistol and fired. The bullet went over Phil's head and lodged in the oak door. Miss Craven screamed again, and ran behind the table with Ben.

Both were terrified with the shot. The room was so full of smoke that it was difficult to see, but that very circumstance proved a blessing.

Phil Marvin, with a catlike spring, bounded under the table, seized Dobson by the legs, and whirled him over like a toy soldier.

Before the villain could realize what had happened to him, the cutlass was knocked from his hand, and a crashing blow fell upon his face. Then he was pinioned in a grasp so tight that he could do nothing but curse.

Phil gave him an unmerciful pounding. He used his fists on the face of Dobson till Miss Craven pleaded for the man.

"I'll let him off for your sake, Miss Craven," said Phil, "but it goes against my grain. Get up, Dobson; you ugly, deceitful libel on humanity. I can hardly keep my hands off you. Get up, and leave this cabin before I'm tempted to kill you."

Dobson, presenting a most unlovely sight in his fright and baffled rage, arose to his feet, and Phil caught him by the shoulders to throw him out.

"Come," said the latter, as he dragged him to the door, "get

out of this, and thank the lady for your life. If we meet again I'll kill you on sight."

Phil, trembling with suppressed rage, held Dobson by the collar as he spoke. He unlocked the door, and was about to shove him out when an idea struck him.

Dobson was commander of the vessel. His word was law with the men. The way to reach the sailors was through their captain!

Phil locked the door, shoved the key in his pocket, and, drawing the captain back, said:

"Dobson, I demand a hostage for the good behavior of the crew of this boat. You're my prisoner."

### CHAPTER XIII.

With the assistance of Ben Hobb, Phil made Captain Dobson a helpless prisoner, fastening his wrists together with irons for that purpose, which he found upon the wall.

The captain made very little resistance, for he feared Phil would repeat the punishment he had given him, or even shoot him as he threatened to do, if compelled.

He threw himself on a sofa, and whined and groaned like a whipped schoolboy.

Phil examined the cabin, and found that it had two staterooms. One was the captain's; the other had been intended for any guest he should have.

The latter Phil gave to Miss Craven, as it was comfortably furnished; the captain's he and Ben would occupy in turns.

The only outlet to the cabin was the door by which they had entered. There were two small windows, heavily shuttered on the inside, and a small covered hatch in the fore part of the cabin communicated with the pilot house.

This hatch could be fastened in the cabin. A closet adjoining the room was well stocked with wines, liquors and cigars; a small table was covered with maps, charts and nautical instruments, and a compass stood on a stationary carpet-covered post.

The room was an elegant one, and their position would have been comfortable but for their great danger.

Half an hour after Dobson's incarceration, and while Phil, Ben and Miss Craven were whispering together in a corner, a knock came upon the door.

"Who's that?" asked Phil.

"I, Demorest. Let me in, Dobson."

Phil drew a pistol, and, approaching Dobson, whispered:

"Talk to that man, using the words I give you, or I'll positively blow your ugly head off!"

Dobson had no choice but to obey. He talked to his accomplice outside, using the words with which Phil supplied him.

"What's the matter, Demorest?"

"What are you doing in there?"

"None of your business."

"Where's the girl?"

"Under my protection, Demmy."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"What I say. These three persons are under my protection. I'll allow no man on my boat to——"

Here Dobson stopped, but Phil shoved the pistol in his face, and he resumed, saying just what Phil directed:

"Demorest."

"What is it, Dobson?"

"If you don't go away from that door I'll blow your brains out!"

There was a pause for a moment, and then came back the answer in fierce and determined tones:

"It's just as I guessed, Dobson. It was you let Marvin on the boat. You've played sharp with me. Now, I'll spring a mine on you if you don't open this door. This vessel is as much mine as yours, and I'll show you who is master."

Demorest's last words showed Phil that he must alter the tone a little, so he made Dobson say:

"Demorest."

"What?"

"I'll talk with you in the morning. I don't want to disturb my guests now. Go away from the door."

"I want to speak to the girl."

"You can't. I'll protect her and her friends with my life. Good-night."

Of all the surprises Demorest ever got, this was the greatest. He could not conceive how the girl and the two men had ingratiated themselves into Dobson's favor and won his protection. He had no doubt it was Dobson who spoke. He knew the man's voice well.

It never occurred to him that Dobson had been compelled to speak the strange words he had listened to. The door was so heavy and thick that he had not heard Phil's whispering.

He went away from the door puzzled and chagrined, and the occupants of the cabin were not disturbed again that night.

A couple of times Dobson was forced by Phil to hold a conversation with the wheelman through the little opening, and to make a show of giving him some necessary directions.

Miss Craven occupied her stateroom, and Phil and Ben took turns in watching the captain and listening for suspicious sounds.

Morning came, and Miss Craven appeared looking fresh and beautiful. The dangers she had passed through had tempered the grief consequent upon the loss of her brother. She even smiled as she greeted Phil and asked him how he had passed the night, and if their danger had diminished.

"Madam," he replied, "we are in a serious situation. It would be folly to underrate our danger, yet I hope, with God's help, we'll come out safe. So far, there has been no sign of any intention to disturb us; but I can tell you, our lives are hanging upon the captain. I've allowed him to go to his stateroom. He is still sleeping. When he comes out I will have a talk with him."

He did not tell the young lady that he expected Demorest would try to starve them out. This contingency was so probable that she would learn it soon enough.

About ten o'clock the captain appeared, still manacled. His whole demeanor had undergone a change which showed he had been under the influence of liquor the previous night.

He was now fierce and sullen, and apparently reckless as to consequences.

"There's been enough o' this," he said, gruffly. "I'm not a baby, and don't intend to be a prisoner on my own boat. Open that door, or I'll flog every one of you."

Phil at once saw he had a different man to deal with from the drunken Dobson of the evening before. This one was resolute, and did not flinch when Phil exposed a pistol.

He went on talking in a threatening and blustering way that terrified poor Miss Craven.

Two alternatives presented themselves to our hero—submission to the captain's wishes or a resort to extreme measures.

If Dobson raised an outcry loud enough for Demorest to hear, the latter would learn that Dobson was kept in the room against his will, and had not turned traitor; the result would be that the door would be smashed in and the prisoner released.

"Look here, Dobson," said Phil, cocking the pistol as if he meant to shoot, "you'd better sit down and let us talk this thing over."

"I won't do it. Open that door."

He spoke so loudly that Phil feared the sailors would hear him. It was evident that he wanted to be heard.

"Miss Craven," said Phil, calmly, "go into your stateroom, please. I find myself compelled to take a human life, and I cannot have you witness such a shocking sight."

He talked this way to impress Dobson with his earnestness.

"Now, Dobson," he continued, coming closer to him, "I feel justified in taking your life to save ours; and, by Heaven! I will shoot if you don't obey me." Here he glared in Dobson's eyes, and put his pistol in his face. "Sit down!"

Dobson sat down sulkily, and his captor continued:

"I'll just admit to you plainly, our only hope of safety lies in you. If you get out of this room, you can cause our death in five minutes——"

"Yes, in less!" growled Dobson.

"I know it, and that consideration makes me desperate; I swear I'll kill you before I'll allow you to jeopardize the life of that young girl. Do you understand me?"

"No."

"Well, I'll put it plainer. You are captain of this boat, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"You can make every man on it obey you?"

"I guess so."

"Answer me."

Phil was cunningly trying to learn the extent of Dobson's influence—whether he or Demorest was really master. This was information he greatly needed.

"What do you want to know for?" snarled Dobson.

"That's my business. If you don't answer I'll ram the muzzle of this down your throat!"

"What is it you want to know?"

"Whom do the men on this ship obey?"

"Me."

"And you obey?"

"Demorest."

"I thought so."

The men looked to Captain Dobson for their orders. They had nothing to do with Demorest, yet the latter ruled them indirectly, for Dobson took his directions from Demorest.

The exact state of their relations to one another had, perhaps, never been put to a test before.

"Well, now, Dobson," continued Phil, looking his captive in the eye, "I've got a proposition to make you."

"What is it?"

"I'll refrain from using your head as a target for pistol practice on two conditions."

"Name them."

Dobson looked so savage while he spoke that Phil took out his pistol and toyed with it in a careless way.

"Condition one: You're to remain in irons in this cabin and keep quiet."

"Well, what then?"

"You're to take your orders from me."

"I'll be——"

"Shot, if you say a word in objection to it."

Dobson looked down the gleaming barrel of the pistol, and then into the unflinching eyes of the determined youth. He saw that every word uttered sprang from the well of earnestness and truth.

"What do you say, Dobson?"

"Done! Call Demorest."

"No, sir. I smell treachery on the start. Do you want me to put a bullet in you?"

This ended the colloquy, which had been carried on in subdued tones, and to which Miss Craven and old Ben had listened in amazement.

Dobson, obeying Phil's orders at the point of the pistol, talked for a while with the wheelman through the small hatch.

Then he gave orders for breakfast to be brought. He was hungry, he said, and did not care to leave the cabin.

He called for the mate, and told that individual to give the necessary orders for running the vessel.

A few minutes later a knock came on the door.

"What's the matter?" asked Dobson.

"Breakfast," came the reply from outside the door.

Here was a difficulty for Phil. How was breakfast to be brought in without the door being opened?

He could see Dobson was building hopes of release on this very circumstance, so he forced him to retire to his stateroom, and when he had locked him in he returned to the cabin door.

He inserted the key and noiselessly turned it. Then he paused and listened, pistol in hand, ready for an emergency.

Old Ben had his pistol ready, too, but Phil counted little on his help.

The door opened suddenly, and Phil saw before him a tall, repulsive-looking sailor, with a large tray in his hands. Demorest was some yards behind the sailor, looking on in an apparently idle and careless way.

Phil hastily concealed his weapon and took the tray. The sailor stood still, as if he expected to be called in, but Phil told him that the captain did not require him, and then stepped back and closed and locked the door.

Our hero had seen Demorest advancing with a look of mingled astonishment and malice on his face.

The tray contained only the captain's breakfast, but it was better than nothing.

Phil called his companions, and they sat down to eat it. There was not enough for three, but he took care Miss Craven ate plenty.

"You are eating nothing, Mr. Marvin."

"Oh, yes, plenty thank you, Miss Craven. I always lose my appetite on the water."

He had not let on to the girl but that the meal had been intended for the four of them.

When Dobson appeared and found his breakfast gone he murmured. Phil shut him up, and told him that next time he would be wiser and order enough for four.

About noon Demorest rapped at the door and asked for the captain, but Phil forbade Dobson to talk to him, and Demorest went away.

Dinner and supper were brought in due order, and passed in through one of the windows, and the day went by without any special happening.

Shortly after dark Demorest again rapped on the door and called the captain's name. Phil immediately brought Dobson out of his stateroom and bade him talk again.

"What's the matter, Demorest? What do you want?"

"I want to talk to you, Dobson."

"Go ahead."

"It's private."

"There are only my friends here."

"Say, Dobson, the men are wondering what's keeping you in there."

"Let them wonder. I'm my own master."

"No, you're not."

"Who's got anything to say about it?"

"I have."

"Go ahead, then."

In forcing the conversation along this line Phil was again cleverly fishing for information.

"What makes you stay in there, Dobson?"

Dobson was here going to speak without waiting for Phil to prompt him.

The latter saw the danger of allowing his prisoner even one moment's freedom. If Dobson could utter two words that would let Demorest know he was not keeping to his cabin of his own free will, the door would be smashed in at once.

Phil's safety and the safety of his companion depended on Demorest's believing the captain to have turned traitor.

"Demorest."

"What?"

"Get away from that door or you'll rue it."

"I will, but I'll make things hot for you, Dobson. You'll not do the treacherous act with me twice."

With this threat Demorest walked away from the cabin door.

Phil saw that something had to be done. There was danger at hand. Demorest had vowed vengeance. He was going to deal with the men himself.

Our hero thought a moment, and then locked Dobson in his stateroom. Miss Craven was already in hers.

"Ben," he whispered, and the light of a sudden resolve was in his eyes, "I'm going to leave you on guard for one hour. Take care and don't let Dobson out, and don't let him know where I am. If there's danger discharge your pistol. Lock the door after me."

"Where are you going, Master Phil?"

"I'm going into the enemy's camp," replied our hero, as he quietly unlocked the door. "I'm going to see what that villain, Demorest, is doing with the men."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Phil stepped out of the cabin, and the door was locked after him. He looked around, and could see no one. He could scarcely see two fathoms ahead of him.

It was not that the night was so intensely dark, but his eyes had for a long time been used to the strong lamplight of the captain's room.

He listened, and could hear no sounds but the flapping of the sails and the plashing of the water against the vessel's side. All on board seemed at rest.

He moved aft a little, and looking over the captain's cabin, saw the wheelsman in the pilot house.

He went to the fore hatchway, and found it closed.

Then he crept aft along by the side of the main cabin, looking in through two or three of the open windows as he passed.

He did not find a sailor on deck. Every man but the wheelsman was below.

What did it mean? Even if it were mess time, the watch and others should be above deck.

He approached the after-hatch. It was not closed. He looked down, and saw one man sitting on a coil of rope, and another on an upturned water bucket.

They were talking in whispers, and appeared to be much interested in the conversation. Now and then they stopped talking and looked forward, as if there was something going on there that claimed a part of their attention.

Phil got down on his knees and listened. He heard some one

speaking away forward, but could not catch the words. Presently he heard a chorus of voices say:

"That's so! True enough!"

Here the man on the rope exchanged glances with him who sat on the bucket, and both shook their heads.

They were evidently not of the same opinion as those who had expressed themselves in the affirmative.

Phil took a good look at these two men, and noticed that both were large and powerful fellows, with a striking look of recklessness about them.

One wore a beard, and was about forty years old; the other was clean-shaven, and looked to be a little younger than his companion.

Presently one of them laid his hand on the other's arm and called his attention to something going on forward. Then both struck an attitude of listening.

Phil listened, too, and heard some one addressing the sailors, speaking in a low tone of voice.

Presently the latter called out, loud enough for Phil to hear:

"Sam! Ned!"

The two individuals that had sat respectively on the coil of rope and the bucket arose and went so far forward that Phil could no longer see them.

"What the deuce does it mean?" muttered our hero. "There seems to be a discussion of some kind going on, and yet it's more like a lecture, for I can hear but one voice. I must catch the words."

Little did Phil know that the question under discussion was one greatly affecting the safety of his life and the lives of Miss Craven and Ben.

He shoved his head down the hatchway a little and looked forward. There was a group of fifteen or twenty men standing listening to one person who was doing all the talking:

This person appeared to be appealing to them, and his manner was very insinuating. Phil stretched his neck a little more and recognized the speaker. It was Arthur Demorest.

He was haranguing the sailors, and gradually working them into a unison of opinion. That was evident from their muttered remarks and general manner.

Phil made up his mind to hear what was going on, but he was too late. The address came to an end. Arthur Demorest asked his final question, and the mass of the sailors responded with hearty "Ayes."

Phil felt uncomfortable. He had an instinctive premonition it meant excessive danger.

This was verified by his seeing the men separate into knots of twos and threes and proceed to take out their dirks and pistols and examine them.

Two of the men separated from the crowd, and one of these came down as far as the coil of rope. Phil recognized him as the younger of the two he had already noticed.

The sailor leaned his foot on the rope and stood for a moment as if in deep thought. Then he glanced again at the crowd, and a heavy frown gathered on his face.

Phil, following the man's glance, saw that the sailors had again grouped around Arthur Demorest.

A minute or two passed and our hero became more and more filled with fear. He knew Arthur Demorest's persuasive power. It was only a question of time till the villain should have all the men ready to accede to his wicked request.

The necessity for prompt action was apparent. Phil lowered his head down the hatch, and called, in a whisper:

"Sam!"

The sailor took his foot off the coil of rope and looked around.

but did not leave the place. He seemed at a loss to know where the sound came from.

Phil, seeing the attention of the crowd was on Demorest, called again:

"Ned, come here."

The sailor approached the ladder and looked up.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"A friend," was Phil's reply.

"Who is it?"

"For God's sake, Ned, come up the ladder. I want to speak to you."

The sailor was amazed, but, after glancing at the crowd and seeing he was not noticed, he ran up the ladder and was soon at Phil's side on the deck.

"What's the matter, youngster?" he asked, gruffly, scrutinizing the lad with his sharp, black eyes.

Phil Marvin seized the bull by the horns, as the figurative expression puts it. In a few words, excitedly uttered, he told the sailor how Miss Craven was a prisoner in the hands of Demorest, who had murdered her brother. He spoke with unconscious eloquence, and in two short minutes made such an impression on the sailor that the latter exclaimed:

"Great thunder! Is that so?"

"True—every word, and I could tell you more. You will not see the lives of an innocent girl and an old man taken?"

The sailor said nothing beyond muttering a vigorous nautical oath. He listened to no more of Phil's pleading, but wheeled around, with an exclamation, and bounded down the ladder.

Phil followed him as far as the hatch, and peered down to see what he was going to do.

Ned hurried forward among the sailors and began addressing them. He emphasized his words by pounding his right fist against the palm of his left hand.

Demorest heard him, and commenced talking, too, and soon there was a perfect babel of voices, but Phil could not catch a word.

By and by a dozen or so of the men put away their weapons and sat sulkily down, showing Demorest they would have no hand in his proposed venture. They would preserve a strict neutrality.

Six or eight crowded around Demorest and applauded his words. They were big, rough-looking fellows, desperate enough for anything.

The two sailors, Sam and Ned, left the crowd and came aft.

When they approached near enough to hear him, Phil called them, and they came quickly up the ladder.

"Boy," said Ned, addressing our hero in a whisper, "there's going to be trouble aboard, an' I may as well tell you, Sam an' me's the only two against Demorest. We can't see a woman abused."

"What about the others that sat down?" asked Phil.

"They won't take sides against Captain Dobson, and yet they won't go against Demorest. They'll stay below."

Phil looked forward with horror to the time when the men should learn that Dobson was not really opposed to Demorest.

"Hark!" exclaimed Sam. "They're goin' to begin."

"Come, then," said Phil, "to the captain's cabin. I rely on your help."

He rushed forward as he spoke, and the two sailors followed.

"Let me in, Ben, let me in!" cried Phil, rapping against the cabin door.

There was no response to Phil's call, but a scuffle could be heard going on inside, and the next moment Miss Craven screamed for help.

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Phil, as he heard the hatchway open and the sailors ascending the steps. "Quick! Ned, Sam—shove with me!"

The three stepped back and made a rush together, and the door of the cabin flew off its hinges.

Phil started at the sight before him. There was Ben Hobb on his back on the floor, and the villain, Dobson, on top of him. The latter was still manacled. He had contrived to break the lock in the stateroom door.

Poor Miss Craven was crouching in a corner in an agony of fright.

"Here—Sam, Ned—get pistols. Quick. Defend the door. Into your room, Miss Craven, and stay there. The villains are attacking us!"

As Phil spoke he pulled Dobson off of Ben and flung him into a corner.

Then he grasped a rope hanging from a peg on the wall, and, passing it under Dobson's handcuffs, made him fast to an iron ring in the floor.

The same moment Demorest's party appeared before the door, and the battle began.

It was a fight between a dozen or more on one side and three on the other. Poor old Ben could not be counted. Phil had made him retire to the stateroom to comfort Miss Craven, for he thought if he himself should be killed she might have a protector left in Ben.

Demorest fired the first shot. It found a mark in the right leg of Sailor Sam, but it seemed only to arouse him to greater fury, for he leaped through the doorway and fired three shots in quick succession into the crowd.

Phil and Ned followed him, also firing, and the deck of the vessel thus became the scene of battle.

For fully a minute the bullets were flying like hail, some striking the small cabin, others breaking the windows of the main cabin, while groans, shrieks and curses showed that several were hurt.

The three defenders were armed with cutlasses as well as pistols, and this, when it came to closer battle, was a slight offset to the disadvantage of numbers.

Demorest's party attempted to gain the cabin, where there were weapons and ammunition in plenty, but Phil and Ned fought them off with their cutlasses, and poured several shots into them.

The crowd were driven back in apparent confusion. Phil Marvin had gained a victory.

Sam Gartshore, for that was the sailor's name, was badly wounded, and lay on the cabin floor.

## CHAPTER XV.

While the battle was waging, Dobson had contrived to loosen the knot of the rope and get himself free from the iron ring in the corner of the cabin. His wrists were still in irons, but that did not prevent him being a source of danger to the defense.

While the attention of Phil and Ned was on the enemy, he rushed to the wall where the weapons were hanging and took down a number of pistols and cutlasses.

Demorest and his men were just giving up the fight when they saw Dobson rush out of the cabin and down the deck past the astonished defenders of Miss Craven. In his arms he carried what the attacking party lacked—weapons.

"Hurrah!" shouted Demorest. "The captain has been a prisoner all this time. He was not a traitor. At them again and kill them—all but the girl."

Three of the men were provided with cutlasses, and four or five more with loaded revolvers.

Things began to look very serious for the defenders, whose revolvers were empty, and one of their number wounded—Sam—beyond the power of doing anything.

"Ned," whispered Phil, "get back into the cabin and put out the light. We are a mark for five of them."

The same moment a shot whizzed past their heads and entered the cabin.

Ned sprang at once to obey the order, and Phil seized the door, and, laying it on its side, set it across the doorway.

As the lights went out two more shots were fired, and a missile was thrown that knocked down the barricade Phil had just planted.

Our hero groped his way across to the wall and took down nearly a dozen pistols. Then he placed himself by Ned's side near the door, and the two of them opened fire.

Another of Arthur Demorest's men fell with a shriek, and of a sudden the battle came to a close.

Dobson shouted to the sailors to follow him, and they all made their way to the after-hatch.

Phil and Ned were astounded at the unexpected turn of affairs. "What on earth's the matter with them?" exclaimed the latter. "Did they imagine we had them beaten?"

"I don't know," replied Phil. "It stumps me. I thought every moment was going to be our last."

"There's some strong reason for it, mark my words. Demorest would never give up the fight if there wasn't. He's bound to kill you, and he's just as anxious to kill me since I deserted him."

"That reminds me," said Phil, "that we owe you our lives. It was a noble act of yours to join our weak forces."

"I've not been a saint in my life," replied Ned. "Nor any one else that ever sailed with Dobson, but it's not in my nature to stand by and see a woman sacrificed."

"Give us your hand, Ned. I hope we'll live many a year to strengthen our acquaintance."

"I hope so, my boy, but I can tell you this, that it won't be half an hour before those scoundrels attack us again. Don't imagine they've given it up."

A groan from the recumbent figure on the floor put an end to their conversation. Both were ashamed to think they had temporarily forgotten poor, wounded Sam.

Phil called old Ben and placed him on watch outside the door, bidding him shout on the first sign of danger.

Then he lit a lamp, and Ned and he knelt by Sam Gartshore's side. They found the poor fellow breathing his last. He had been wounded by no less than three bullets and the stab of a dirk.

His last words were for his companion, Ned, whom he loved as a brother. Both had some time before quarreled with Demorest and Dobson, and had resolved to sever connections with them at the first opportunity.

Alas! the opportunity had come for poor Sam, and as his last breath left him Ned cried like a child.

"Good-by, mate," said the latter, in a voice husky from emotion. "We've taken our last trip together."

Phil was impressed with Ned's tenderness, and developed there and then a fondness for him, and a trust in him that time never effaced.

"I'm going to bury him decently, lad," said Ned. "I couldn't bear to let those other scoundrels touch him."

He took the body up tenderly in his arms, walked out on the deck and approached the railing.

The moon had just risen, and its beams threw a soft light on

him as he paused at the railing to take a last look at the face of the friend he had loved so well.

He stooped and kissed the cold lips; then muttering, "Good-by, Sam, old friend," consigned the body to its watery grave.

When he returned to the cabin there was in his countenance no trace of emotion.

He had left that for the hours when he should be alone and could recall and dwell undisturbed upon the past.

"Phil," he said, suddenly, "I have just thought of the reason why those scoundrels brought the fight to such a sudden close."

"It could not have been because they feared defeat."

"No, no, it's not that; they'll bother us again in time. But do you see that?"

Phil looked in the direction Ned pointed, and could see nothing to rout the enemy.

"What did it, Ned?" he asked, staring in wonder.

"Those two powder kegs."

"Ah—"

"Dobson thought of them, and conveyed the news. They feared to fire again, for the reason that their bullets might ignite the powder and blow them and the ship, as well as ourselves, out of the sea."

"Can't we use the kegs, Ned?"

"How?"

"Place them in sight near the door, and dare them to shoot."

"No, lad. It's safer to throw them overboard. Those men mean to have our lives, and will soon think of a plan of overcoming the difficulty of the powder kegs."

Phil ran for a moment to Miss Craven's door to tell her that for the present they were safe, and to bid her have hope.

"Ned," he said, returning to the door of the cabin, "could we count on any more of the sailors joining us?"

"No, lad—no hope of that. There's only the old man at the wheel, an' he's better where he is. Outside o' him there isn't a man aboard as wouldn't follow Demorest and Dobson to perdition."

"But what about those men that wouldn't join Demorest, and sat down?"

"That was because they thought Dobson and Demorest had quarreled. They would not be untrue to their captain."

"Great Heaven! then—"

"What?"

"These men will also be with Demorest now? Our danger has increased."

"That's it, lad. Every man on the boat is against us. How we can escape, I can't see."

"Did you know you were stepping into such danger when you joined me, Ned?"

"Well, you can bet I didn't expect to gain by it."

"I'll never forget your noble act."

"Tut—tut! You may not have long to remember it. What do you say to throwing those powder kegs into the sea?"

"It seems to me they make us safe."

"Look here, lad. Listen to me. I know every man aboard o' this boat. There's some o' them 'ud fire through the keg at you if they knew they'd be blown into atoms the same minute. They—"

"Hark! What's that?"

"What?"

"I heard a bell tinkling."

"Ah, yes—listen. The engines have stopped working. There's something up."

The same moment old Ben, who had been on watch, put his head in the cabin door and said:

"Master Phil, there's a mist. I can't see the hatchway."

Phil and Ned looked out. To their surprise, the vessel had become enveloped in a fog so thick that they could not see the mainmast.

"We're by the Newfoundland Banks, I think," said Ned, who was an experienced seaman, "and I can tell you, the vessel's not having the attention she needs. There's only the first mate and wheelsman above deck."

"What have the engines stopped for?" asked Phil.

"Because—Ben, you'd better go in an' comfort the young woman; tell her there's no danger—because the wheelsman can't see."

"Where are we bound for?"

"Don't know. Only Demorest and Dobson know that."

The vessel was now but barely moving in the water. The whistles were blowing and the foghorn piping to prevent possible collision with other ships.

The sounds were dismal enough, but to those momentarily expecting attack they were like the harbingers of death.

After a while the fog thinned a little and the engines started working again.

Ned Burton had been listening at the hatchway. He now returned to Phil's side and informed him of what he had heard.

Demorest had just offered a reward to any of the men who would go above and capture one or more of the prisoners.

"Did any of them volunteer?" asked Phil.

"Yes, a dozen or more of them, and they're getting ready."

"Then we'll get ready, too," said our hero.

"How?"

"Fasten down the fore-hatch, and force them to go aft to get on deck. Then you and I can prevent them getting this far by each of us guarding one of the passages on the side of the cabin."

"Good boy, Phil; you've hit it! Call the old man."

Phil ran forward through the mist and lowered the hatch. He sprang the bolt that was used to keep it down in a storm, thus preventing the men from gaining the deck by that entrance.

They quickly made their arrangements. The two powder kegs were put in the captain's stateroom. Ben Hobb was placed inside the captain's cabin, with orders to shoot if any of the men succeeded in passing Phil and Ned.

Phil took up his position guarding the passage on the starboard side of the main cabin, and Ned took the other. Each had from six to a dozen pistols and a cutlass.

There was just one other way the enemy could come, and that was through the main cabin.

There was a door at the forward end of it, but Phil and Ned hoped to guard that between them.

"Get ready," whispered Phil. "They're coming."

"Which side?"

"On yours and mine both—and there are voices in the cabin."

Phil felt a chill go through him as he heard footsteps approaching through the fog.

The attack was about to commence.

Laying down his cutlass, he raised two pistols, and was cocking them when there came a heavy shock, accompanied by a terrific crash and a grinding noise.

He was thrown backward with fearful force, and narrowly escaped falling over the rail.

The vessel had struck.

vessel. The crashing noises continued, and the ship groaned and cracked so that he thought it was breaking to pieces.

At last it came to a standstill, with the prow nearly eight feet higher than the stern.

There was silence for a moment, and then Phil heard the sailors shouting and calling to one another.

The fog had lifted, and he could see over the ship's side a great white, towering body that reached as high as the top of the mizzen-mast, and glistened and sparkled with the rays of the moon.

The *Albatross* had collided with a monster floating iceberg. Its prow had dug into it and was wedged fast, and the two were now floating as one body.

Phil scrambled to his feet and crawled toward the captain's cabin. It was like going up hill. He stumbled over a couple of corpses on the way.

He reached the cabin door, and found Ned Barton there ahead of him.

"The old man's all right, Phil," said the latter. "He's only got a few bruises—go you to the lady."

Phil hurried to the stateroom and pulled open the door. Poor Miss Craven was lying, where she had fallen, on the floor. She was more frightened than hurt, and, as Phil picked her up, asked what was the matter.

"We have struck an iceberg, Miss Craven, and luckily so, for it prevented an attack. Are you hurt?"

"Not a bit. I was kneeling when the shock came. Any danger?"

"I can't tell as yet if the ship is damaged, but, at all events, it does not appear to be sinking."

"Oh, it is fearful!" she said, and she shuddered with fright.

"Be not afraid, miss. I have faith that God will protect one as good as you. Remain here a moment."

Returning to the cabin, he was surprised to find that neither Ben nor Ned was there. Both had disappeared.

His heart nearly stopped beating when he thought that something might have happened them.

He went out on deck and looked around.

The sailors were all busy at the after part of the vessel.

There was, at present, not much danger of attack from them.

He listened, and fancied he heard Ned and old Ben talking, but could not tell from what direction the voices came.

He approached the port side of the ship, and leaning over the railing, looked around.

The iceberg was several times larger than the ship, and was very irregular in shape.

The prow of the boat had struck a point, and the keel had run up for several feet on it, thus lowering the after-deck almost to the water's edge.

While Phil was leaning over the rail the engines started to work backward. The keel slipped a foot or two on the ice, and the vessel gave a sudden lurch to port side.

As a result of the shock, Phil lost his balance and went head foremost over the railing.

He fell into the water and sank. When he came to the surface he heard shouts and cries that told him several others had fallen overboard, as well as himself.

He tried to swim, but found the current dragging him farther between the vessel and the ice.

To escape death by being crushed, he dived and swam under the water back toward the open sea. It was a frightful situation. The water was cold, and chilled him to the marrow. He was in danger of being seized with cramps, or, worse still, of being caught in the paddle-wheel and crushed to pieces.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Phil Marvin tried to get to his feet, but was prevented by a succession of sharp shocks that imparted a swaying motion to the

As he was coming toward the surface he felt himself being drawn into a current the force of which he could not resist. He immediately thought of the suction created by the revolving wheel, and all hope died within him.

Up, up he rose, in spite of his strenuous efforts to keep away from the terrible wheel. He must now be near the surface.

Suddenly his head bumped against a hard object.

He thought it was the keel of the ship, and put up his hand to grasp it.

The shock he got nearly deprived him of the power of thought. The object with which he came in contact was cold.

He was underneath the terrible iceberg. He could not breathe, and he had now been several seconds under the water.

He put up his hands and shoved himself away from the berg, but the current and his own buoyancy brought him back against it.

He tried to push himself along under it, but soon stopped. It was hard work, and he was not sure he was not going farther under it.

In the confusion of his fright he had lost all idea of the direction of the spot where he had first sunk.

Heavens! he was being smothered; he couldn't do much longer without air. He must make another effort or die. He put up his hands again and worked himself along, this time letting the current help him.

While he was vainly groping for the edge, memory returned to him, and he realized he was going farther toward the center of the berg.

He resolved to make one more effort. He tried to stem the current and go back the way he came. It was no use.

The current overpowered him and forced him back against the cold ice.

He was now hopeless and exhausted.

He had been under water nearly twice as long as he had ever been in his life.

He was smothering, and he felt his senses gradually leaving him and a terrible, deathlike numbness coming over him.

The choking sensation was so awful that he instinctively threw out his hands to grasp anything.

His right hand touched the solid cake of ice, but his fingers penetrated a fissure he knew not how large or small.

As a drowning man grasps a straw, he grasped this and pulled. As a result of his effort his head approached the fissure, and, lo! both head and shoulders shot into a big hole in the bottom of the iceberg.

To his surprise and relief, he could breathe, though with great difficulty.

Instantaneously his hopes revived. He grasped the sides of the big hole, and keeping his head out of water, breathed again and again.

Oh, the ambrosia of the gods was never more sweet than those few mouthfuls of air!

When he had drunk in enough air to bring back consciousness and a portion of his lost strength, he opened his eyes. He was enveloped in total darkness.

In one instant he realized that he was out in the broad Atlantic, imprisoned under an iceberg of gigantic dimensions.

He thought for a moment, and asked himself how it was that he could breathe.

The answer reason gave him was that somehow a current of air reached him, and there must be an outlet, however small.

He reached out his hand in the darkness and found a ledge of ice wide enough to hold him. Shivering and benumbed, he crawled out of the water onto this ledge, and rested his weary body for fully a minute.

Then he groped again, and to his astonishment found that he could almost stand upright and walk forward.

Soon he saw a streak of light. He approached it, and, looking up, perceived that there was an immense fissure in the iceberg that reached to the top.

He could see the sky, but could not see the water. He began climbing in an oblique line, and after a quarter of an hour's hard work succeeded in reaching a point from which he could see a portion of the sea.

There was no sign of the ship, but it might be immediately beneath him, for he could not see the water within half a mile of the berg.

He had now two courses before him. One was to climb still higher, at the imminent risk of falling, to a point that would give him a wider range of view.

The ice, in places, was as soft as snow, and climbing was not impossible, though difficult.

The other course was to descend by following a sort of gully that sloped gradually toward, but not all the way to, the water's edge.

He chose the latter.

He made use of his pocket knife, digging the blade into the ice to hold himself.

His hands were so cold and numb he could scarcely clasp the handle. His body, too was nearly frozen from the contact with the ice after the drenching he had got in the water.

He had descended about thirty feet when he lost his hold of the knife. Down he went, sliding, slipping and rolling.

Luckily the slope was gradual, or he would have been smashed to pieces.

He stopped at last, and found himself in a cavern that was quite dark. But there was a passage from it leading out toward the sea, and as he crawled along this he found it becoming brighter.

After a while he saw, through a hole nearly as large as a doorway, the sea glimmering and shining with the rays of the moon.

His hopes grew stronger, and he crawled faster. Of a sudden he stopped, his heart beating with a new fear.

A dark object had passed by the mouth of the passage. Whether it was something floating in the water, or an object moving on a ledge of the ice outside, he could not tell.

He listened, but could hear nothing but the dismal squeal of a seagull and the plashing of the water against the ice. He continued crawling, and at length reached the mouth of the passage.

The sea was before him—a broad, dreary expanse, with no object upon it to relieve its monotonous vastness.

Outside the passage was a projecting ledge or platform of ice. It varied in width from two to twenty feet. Its surface was soft enough to afford a safe foothold.

Phil crawled out on the ledge and looked around. There was nothing in sight. He could not imagine what the dark object could have been that passed the mouth of the hole.

He was seized with an awful sense of loneliness when he saw how helpless he was. There was no possible way for him to get off the berg.

The vessel, no doubt, was gone, as the engines were working it loose from the ice when he fell.

His friends, if they were not already killed, were separated from him forever.

Exhausted, half frozen, half senseless and altogether hopeless, Phil Marvin was in a position truly horrible.

To keep himself from freezing, he ran along the ledge till he came to a place where a sharp angle of ice jutted out almost to the water's edge. Clinging to this point, he leaned forward and glanced around it.

The sight he saw astonished and horrified him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

The sight that confronted Phil Marvin accounted for the dark object he had seen moving past the mouth of the passage.

Before him, and not ten feet away, were Arthur Demorest and two sailors of the *Albatross*.

As yet they did not see Phil. They were lying side by side on the ledge of ice, and were just about exhausted.

They, too, had fallen off the deck when the vessel gave the sudden lurch.

How they had got here Phil could not tell. Perhaps they had gone through dangers equal to his own. He wondered why they did not shout to attract the attention of their companions on the vessel.

He did not know that they had shouted again and again while he was under the iceberg. They were now as hopeless as he was, and quite as exhausted.

Phil felt a degree of relief in seeing Demorest there; it made Miss Craven at least a little safer.

While he was watching them, the three men shouted, sending up their voices together in the hope of being heard.

Almost the same moment a small boat appeared around the corner beyond where they lay.

Phil saw it before they did, and immediately drew back his head.

He could scarcely refrain from giving vent to a wild cry of joy. He heard cheers coming from the boat, which were answered faintly by Demorest and his companions.

His heart now sank within him. The boat had come to rescue the others, and he dared not show himself.

He listened to the conversation that began even before the boat reached the ledge.

"Where's the *Albatross*?" asked Demorest.

"On the other side. We got her off with little damage."

It was Dobson who spoke. He and another sailor manned the yawl.

"Come on; give us your hand, Demmy. You must be froze."

"I am. Have you any brandy with you?"

"Yes; here, take a nip. It'll warm you."

Phil listened to the gurgling sound of the liquor as it passed down the greedy throats of Demorest and his companions.

The lad had ever had a horror of spirituous liquors, but he would at that moment have given all he ever hoped to possess for one mouthful.

If ever man needed a stimulant he did as he stood leaning against the ice, with his teeth chattering and his limbs benumbed.

"Where's the girl?" asked Demorest.

"She's aboard, but there's a couple o' the others missin', among them young Marvin, besides five of our men drowned."

"The girl's safe, you say?"

"Yes. She was in the cabin when I left."

The news that Margaret Craven was safe aboard the *Albatross* brought little comfort to Phil Marvin. It simply meant she was still in the power of her ruthless captors.

Besides, it was coupled with the information that one of her protectors besides himself was missing. That must be either Ben or Ned.

Poor Phil endured mental tortures no less excruciating than those assailing his body.

Risking discovery, he looked over the projection of ice and saw Demorest and his companions entering the boat.

He did not know whether to shout or not. If he did, it was likely they would kill him or leave him there to perish; if he did not, his last hope was gone.

He saw Dobson and the sailor that had accompanied him pick up the oars.

The yawl boat began to move. In another moment it would round the corner, and he would be left alone in the wide ocean, beyond the reach of humanity.

The thought horrified him.

He shouted, and at the same time threw up his hands.

The occupants of the yawl were astonished, particularly those who had been rescued.

"Another pick up!" exclaimed Demorest. "Back water, Dobson, quick!"

Phil thought from these words that he had been recognized, and was about to be saved.

When the yawl came alongside, the surprise of the men broke out afresh.

"Marvin, as I live!" exclaimed Dobson.

"So it is!" echoed Demorest. "Where in thunder did he come from? He wasn't here a minute ago."

The five of them stared as if they could not believe the evidence of their eyesight.

"For God's sake, help me!" said Phil. "Take me into the yawl."

"Oh, no, you don't," answered Demorest, with a scornful laugh. "You'll stay right there, my fine lad, where you'll cease to be a nuisance to the good ship *Albatross*."

"And you—you, Dobson? Will you see me die?" pleaded Phil. "No, not by a blamed sight," was the reply.

"Oh, thank you, bless you, Dobson! I knew you could not——"

"No, of course I'll not see you die. I'm not such a fool as to stay around here long enough to see you die, you varmint."

This cruel speech and the heartless laugh that followed from the men shocked the tender feelings of Phil Marvin. Turning to Demorest as his last hope, he cried:

"Oh, Demorest, think—think; I saved your life——"

"When?"

"When I aided you to escape from Shirley jail."

"Oh, no, my fine boy, that was Craven you helped. You wouldn't have stirred a foot if you had known it was me. It was Margaret Craven's bright eyes that supplied the motive power. Go to her for your reward!" and the heartless villain laughed again.

Phil Marvin raised a revolver. The temptation to take Demorest's life was great. He saw that none of the men had any other weapon than a knife or dirk.

"Do you mean to leave me here to perish?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Demorest, crouching down in the boat for protection. "Row on, men—row on."

The yawl started. Phil let the weapon drop and sank to his knees. He could not take a human life under any other circumstances than that of absolute self-defense.

Demorest knew this, and dared to sit up in the boat to give a parting stab to the suffering lad.

"Good-by, Marvin," said he, ironically. "The ice'll melt when it floats down to the Gulf Stream. Be a good boy and don't cry. I'll take care o' Maggie Craven. She'll be my bride, and we'll live in Hetherington Castle, an' some time when we have leisure we'll put up a monument in memory of you."

While Phil Marvin, with head bowed, prayed to Heaven to strengthen him against the temptation to take Demorest's life, he heard the oars grate in the rowlocks and the yawl move off.

He also heard Demorest say:

"Steer farther away from the berg."

"Why?" asked Dobson.

"It's breaking up. See that big crack to the left there? It's going to split, sure."

Phil looked up. He could not see the crack referred to. His eyes were dimmed with tears he could not suppress.

He looked over the projecting piece of ice again and his heart sank. His last chance was gone.

The yawl had disappeared, and he was left alone. Oh, the misery of his situation.

He sat down on the cold ice, and giving way to despair, and the awful sense of loneliness, cried like a child.

Yes, Phil Marvin, strong and manly as he was, cried out aloud, but his tears were not for himself.

He thought of the terrible fate of poor Miss Craven and old Ben, and of Sailor Ned, whom he now believed drowned.

He did not submit to his weakness long. It was not in his nature to do so. He leaped to his feet and, drawing out a revolver, fired two shots.

The cartridges were waterproof, and had not been damaged by immersion.

Then he danced up and down the ledge, and ran about, and waved his arms to restore some warmth to his body.

He shouted, too, with all his might, but his voice seemed to be beaten back by the great wall of ice that surrounded him on three sides.

It was now nearly as bright as day. The moon had got high in the heavens, and its beams falling on the iceberg made it glisten and sparkle like an immense prism.

It was a beautiful sight, but poor Phil was not in a mood to enjoy it. All hope had abandoned him.

Suddenly, while he was straining his eyes looking in the direction in which the yawl had disappeared, he was startled by a noise that seemed to come from beneath his feet.

Almost before he could turn his head the noise broke into a mighty roar, resembling thunder, and the ice cracked in the very fissure by which he had descended.

He started back in astonishment as he saw before him a yawning chasm reaching almost to where he stood.

Another roar followed, and the iceberg split into two pieces.

Between these high, massive walls was an ever-widening channel.

Lo! as he looked down this channel he caught a glimpse of the ship *Albatross*. She was moving, but which way she was heading he could not see.

The berg on which he stood veered around in such a way as to shut off his view.

A few moments passed, during which he suffered tortures of mind that cannot be described. Then, as he was on the point of casting himself down on the ice to die, he saw a dark object shoot around the corner of the berg that had separated from his.

It was the *Albatross*. Its sudden appearance was due to the veering of the icefloe, as well as to its own motion.

The ship was under a full head of steam and was going rapidly away from the iceberg. Soon it would be at a distance of half a dozen cable lengths.

Phil shouted and fired two shots to attract attention, but the vessel kept on its course. There was no sign that he had been noticed. The big black stern was turned toward him, and prevented him from seeing, or being seen by, those on the forward deck.

"God in Heaven!" he cried in agony, "am I to be left to die in this desolate place? Save me, save me!"

But the distance widened; the hull became smaller, and in a few minutes the *Albatross* was nearly a mile away.

Human endurance could stand no more.

Phil Marvin uttered an agonizing cry and fell fainting on the ledge of the iceberg.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Meanwhile Margaret Craven had suffered agony of mind scarcely less than that endured by our hero.

A moment after the vessel gave the lurch, old Ben ran into the cabin, crying:

"Miss Craven, Miss Craven, Master Phil's overboard!"

The young lady, who was just regaining her feet after the shock, shrieked when she heard the news, and this brought Ned Burton, the sailor, to her side.

All three were horrified at the catastrophe. Ned left the swooning lady in Ben's care, and hurrying out on deck, looked over the railing.

He saw several dark forms struggling in the water. He called Phil's name, and got no answer.

He rushed across the deck for a rope. When he returned to the railing every one of the men had disappeared.

The same moment the vessel slid off the ice, the engines having been set to work backward.

Ned, in his heart, felt that Phil was gone. He did all that could be done under the circumstances.

He scanned the water with his eyes, and stood ready to leap overboard to the rescue, but no Phil appeared.

Then he saw Dobson and a sailor man the yawl and start off around a projecting point of the berg to search for Demorest, who had gone overboard with the others.

Ned seized the opportunity presented to him.

He ran forward and ascended to the pilot house.

"Jenkins," he whispered to the old wheelsman, "I saved your life once."

"You did, Ned."

"You promised to serve me if the time came."

"Ay, lad."

"It's now. Follow me and obey!"

The old man never hesitated. He listened to a quickly-whispered instruction of Ned's, and mounted to the upper deck.

"Smith," called Ned, addressing another sailor, "you'll take the wheel. Meanwhile help below!"

The sailor responded: "Ay, sir," and went down the hatchway.

The first mate had fallen overboard, and the captain was absent. This placed Ned Burton, as second mate of the *Albatross*, in command.

Ned gave another order. He sent the rest of the men below, with instructions to go quickly into the hold, shift the cargo and search for a leak.

The men obeyed readily, for in the common danger that menaced them all thought of the late fight was forgotten. Besides, they had always liked Ned.

As they descended through the hatchway Ned glanced again over the vessel's side, hoping to see Phil.

Then he rushed into the cabin and told Miss Craven and Ben quickly to take what things they wanted and mount to the upper deck.

He himself locked both staterooms, snatched some weapons off the wall, and hastened below.

He was back in time to assist Miss Craven to the upper deck.

Old Jenkins had the smaller of the two lifeboats slung ready on the davits; Miss Craven and Ben were placed in, and Ned and Jenkins lowered the boat to the water's edge on the starboard side.

It took but a few moments for the two sailors to get below and clamber down the vessel's side. Ned entered last, after having passed a box of provisions and several bottles over to Jenkins.

"Now, Jenkins, to the oars," he whispered. "Quietly—make as little noise as possible. Have courage, Miss Craven. Don't cry out, no matter what happens."

Almost silently they propelled the boat through the water in the direction opposite to that taken by Dobson's yawl.

They hugged closely to the vessel's side as they passed, hoping to escape notice on account of the confusion on board.

Ned's aim was to keep close to the iceberg, and if possible to gain the other side of it, so as to place it between them and the *Albatross*.

He kept a sharp lookout for a sign of Phil Marvin, but he had little hope.

It gave him all he could do to keep Miss Craven from breaking into loud and passionate outbursts of grief.

It was not his intention to leave the vicinity without searching for Phil. He meant to hide behind the iceberg till the *Albatross* had sailed away.

They had rowed but a short distance when a sound from the ship told them that Dobson had returned.

A few moments later they heard the engine working, and knew that the vessel had started.

"Row fast, Jenkins," whispered Ned, "and keep close to the berg as possible. We must go almost around it to be safe."

Indeed there was little safety in being near the berg, for it kept moving a little, and the boat could not go too close to it.

"Hark!" exclaimed Miss Craven. "Do you hear that?"

"Yes," replied Ned. "Two shots. Those are not fired from the *Albatross*."

"It may be Philip."

"God grant so!"

Meanwhile Dobson had reached the *Albatross* with Demorest and the other rescued sailors.

He was no sooner aboard than he gave orders to start the vessel. The men came up from below and set about their various duties.

In the confusion Ned Burton and Jenkins were not missed. As for Miss Craven, she was supposed to be still in the captain's cabin.

Demorest, believing she was now in his power, was in no hurry to disturb her.

He was cold and exhausted, and followed Dobson to the main cabin to get a drink of brandy before changing his clothes.

As he was putting the glass to his lips he was startled by a terrific roar.

"What on earth's that, Dobson?" he asked.

Dobson looked out of the cabin door before answering.

"It's the iceberg breaking up," he said. "It has split in two."

The roar was the same that had startled Phil Marvin. Demorest laughed and gulped down his brandy.

"Pour us out another, Dobson," he said; "I want to drink to young Marvin's health. I wouldn't care to be in his shoes now."

"Serves the duffer right. Good luck to you, Demmy."

"Good health. I must get on a warm suit, and go and chat to Mademoiselle Craven."

At the moment when the iceberg split in two with such a roar, Ned Burton was endeavoring to keep the small boat as near to it as possible.

The *Albatross* was following them, and going so fast that he thought it better to rest on their oars, and trust to the shadow than to emerge into the moonlight and around the corner.

The shock nearly upset the boat. It rocked and shipped water, and would have been jammed to pieces but for Ned's skill.

Miss Craven and Ben uttered exclamations of fright, but fortunately they were lost in the mighty noise.

There was now great danger of discovery, as the attention of the sailors on the vessel was attracted toward the berg.

At the risk of being crushed Ned steered the boat into the channel, formed by the breaking iceberg.

An immense high wall was on either side. He and Jenkins kept their oars ready to pull out again if the walls approached too close together.

In this way the fugitives escaped the observation of those on board the *Albatross*.

That vessel passed them by, turned the corner of the ice floe, and sailed seaward.

When it had gone to a safe distance Ned and Jenkins pulled out of the channel, and started to round the berg by the way they had come.

They wanted to get to the scene of the accident and search for Phil.

They did not find him there, but as they rowed further around, Miss Craven caught sight of a dark object lying on a projecting ledge of the ice.

"Look! Look!" she exclaimed. "What's that?"

They rowed quickly to the spot and found poor Phil Marvin lying on the ice face downward; he was unconscious.

Their joy can be imagined when, on taking him into the boat, they found that, though he was half frozen, he was still alive.

Ned poured some brandy down his throat, and all set to work to restore warmth to his body.

In a quarter of an hour the lad revived, and to his astonish-

ment found himself lying snugly in the bottom of the boat, with his head resting on Miss Craven's lap.

His first words were a feebly uttered: "Thank God!" The *Albatross* was still in sight, not more than three or four knots away.

Ned and Jenkins took up the oars and set to work to propel their boat as fast as possible in the opposite direction.

"There may be some chance o' reachin' the Newfoundland coast or one of the islands south of it if the weather keeps favorable," said Jenkins; "but it'll take a good long time. We can't do it with oars, that's certain."

"There's no use hoistin' the sail," said Ned. "The wind's almost dead against us."

"We can tack, Ned."

"I'd rather not hoist it till the *Albatross* is out of sight, Jenkins. We'd be more easily sighted with a sail up. You know sooner or later they'll miss Miss Craven, and——"

"Oh, what then?" asked Miss Craven, trembling. "Would they pursue us? Would they bother returning?"

"Yes, if they were halfway to the Saragossa Sea, miss. They are not the kind of men to let their prey slip easily out of their hands."

"Let me take an oar," said Phil, raising himself weakly on his elbow. "The exercise will——"

"No—no. Lie down, lad," said Ned. "You'll get your turn soon enough, an' then you'll need more strength than you've got yet."

The boat made but slow progress. It was large and contained too much of a dead weight to be easily wielded by two men.

After three-quarters of an hour's hard work they seemed but a short distance from the floating berg, still visible in the moonlight.

Their situation was, indeed, an extremely dangerous one.

They were in a latitude where the weather cannot be depended upon. Even old mariners dreaded it. They had a frail craft to be caught with in a storm, and they had but very little provisions. Water they had none. Ned had had time only to snatch a few bottles of wine.

Phil Marvin lay dreamily listening to Miss Craven and Ben, who sat in the stern of the boat and talked of poor murdered Walter.

He was between them and the rowers, snatches of whose conversation he could also catch.

"You think so, Jenkins?" Ned was asking, though he did not cease to work the oars.

"Ay, Ned, I do."

"I didn't see them turning."

"Nör I, lad, but—how far off would you say, Ned?"

"Not more than ten miles."

Phil moved a little nearer the rowers and listened with increased interest. He fancied something was wrong. The men were endeavoring not to let the young lady hear them.

Phil was too weak to sit up and look over the stern of the boat, but he watched Ned's face while the latter tugged at the oars. He thought he saw anxiety pictured on it.

"What's the matter, Ned?" he whispered.

"Nothing, lad, nothing. Lie down and sleep a while. You need rest after bein' so nigh death."

Phil closed his eyes and dozed for a few minutes. Presently he was awakened by a jerk of the boat, due to a quickened motion of the oars.

"How far would you saw now, Ned?" whispered Jenkins.

"Hush! They'll hear you. About seven miles."

There was a tone of anxiety in Ned's voice that did not escape Miss Craven, though she did not catch the words.

She leaned forward and listened intently.

"The wind's changing a bit, Jenkins."

"Ay, Ned. We'll have bad weather afore many hours."

"Hadn't we better alter our course a little?"

"More to the north?"

"Ay, an' see if that makes them change."

No one spoke as the rowers pulled vigorously on their right oars, and then settled down to a long, steady stroke.

But Phil Marvin noticed that their eyes continually sought the southeast, and that the lines about Ned's mouth grew firmer and firmer.

At last the latter whispered:

"Guess the jig's up, Jenkins."

"Ay, lad, it begins to look like it."

"They've a full head on, an' there ain't a part of the stern to be seen."

"What's the matter?" cried Miss Craven and Ben in one breath.

Ned's only answer was to point to the southeast.

Miss Craven turned in her seat and, after looking a moment in the direction indicated, uttered a shriek.

Phil aroused himself, and with an effort sat up. Though he was horrified by what he saw, he was scarcely surprised.

The *Albatross* was scarcely six miles behind them, and was rapidly bearing down upon them.

But they saw something else there that made their hearts leap to their throats.

It was the stately white form of a United States man-of-war.

"Hurrah!" cried Ned, as he caught sight of the battleship, which had been hitherto hidden from their view by a bank of fog. "It is the *Massachusetts*. We are saved! She patrols these banks at this time o' year looking for dangerous shoals and rocks."

The boat was quickly put about and headed in the direction of the war ship, so as to meet her as she came on.

Meanwhile those on the *Albatross* had evidently seen all they wanted of the battleship and decided that their safest plan was to give up the chase and get out of the vicinity as quickly as possible.

Her bowsprit swung around until she was stern-on to the battleship, and then, under a full head of steam, the yacht sped away toward the southeastern horizon.

The *Massachusetts*, however, paid no attention to the yacht, but plowed grandly on through the water, coming on under a good

head of steam with "a bone in her teeth," to use a seaman's expression.

Half an hour later the party were aboard the war ship and Phil had told their story.

They received the kindest and most courteous treatment.

Phil was lionized as a hero and Miss Craven was the recipient of a great deal of respectful attention from the handsome young officers on board, who appreciated to the full her beauty, heroism and intelligence.

The *Albatross* was still visible in the horizon, and after a long, stern chase the *Massachusetts* overtook her, placed all on board in irons, and took the yacht itself in tow for New York.

The yacht was seized by the Federal Government, as it had been engaged in the smuggling business on several occasions.

The crew, after a severe examination by the Federal authorities in New York, were set free.

It did not fare so well, however, with their leaders.

Arthur Demorest was hanged for the murder of Walter Craven. Dobson, on an old charge, was imprisoned for life.

One year later, Phil Marvin, having sold all the property left him by his uncle, who had died during his absence, went to England to visit an old friend.

When he reached his destination he was astonished to find that his friend, Margaret Craven, who had left for England some time before, resided in an old baronial castle that had descended to her through a long line of ancestors reaching back to the days of feudalism.

Whether his trip was a business one or not we have not been informed, but we know he married Lady Margaret Craven Hetherington shortly after he arrived in England, and that he settled down with a snug rent roll of some thirteen thousand pounds a year.

Ben Hobb lived with them, and Ned Burton got a position that might well be called a sinecure. He holds it yet, and says he has done nothing but talk over old times with Ben and count his salary.

There is no Phil Marvin to-day; but if you go to Somersetshire, England, you will easily find a tall, robust, quiet-mannered man whom the people love to call "Good Sir Philip Craven Hetherington, Bart." You will most likely find him in the company of his charming wife.

If you look closely in his face you will discern the lineaments of the youth that battled with death under the iceberg.

You will recognize the jail-breaker of Shirley.

THE END.

Next week's issue. No. 29, will contain "Robert Brendon, Bellboy; or, Under the Hypnotic Spell," the strange story of a poor bellboy, who, through his cleverness and daring, became the secretary of a beautiful European baroness. The attempts of a gang of villains to control the baroness through hypnotic influence and the boy's gallant fight against their tremendous power, are things you can't afford to miss.

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